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# CATECHISM MADE EASY,

BEING

A FAMILIAR EXPLANATION

OF THE

## Catechism of Christian Doctrine.

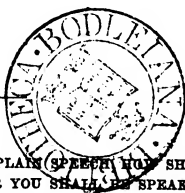
IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE

REV. HENRY GIBSON,

*Catholic Chaplain to the Kirkdale Gaol and Kirkdale Industrial Schools.*

VOL. I.



"EXCEPT YOU UTTER BY THE TONGUE PLAIN (SPEECH NOT) SHALL  
IT BE KNOWN WHAT IS SAID? FOR YOU SHALL BE SPEAKING  
INTO THE AIR."—I. COR. XIV. 9.

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***IMPRIMATUR***

**✠ ALEXANDER,**

***Episcopus Liverpoolitanus.***



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TO THE  
RIGHT REV. ALEXANDER GOSS, D.D.  
BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL,  
THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR.



TO THE  
RIGHT REV. ALEXANDER GOSS,  
BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL.

---

MY LORD,

In offering the result of my labours, I have to thank your Lordship for the kind expressions of regard which accompanied your acceptance of this dedication.

The following work has arisen from notes accumulated during the several years in which I have had charge of the children in the Kirkdale Industrial Schools.

Though well known to your Lordship it may not be known to others, that these children are the pauper children of the Parish of Liverpool, who, instead of being brought up in the workhouse, are, with many obvious advantages, transferred to a handsome and commodious building erected for their separate accomodation in Kirkdale. Here they are treated with all the care and attention which can fairly be

looked for on their behalf; and, in addition to the ordinary subjects of education, they are taught certain industrial occupations, suited to their capacities and to their prospect of employment hereafter. When of sufficient age, they are put out to service, or apprenticed to some trade, in order to be in a position to earn their own livelihood. For many years the Catholic children were placed indifferently in any situations that offered themselves; and from the data, which I have been able to collect, there can be no doubt that by far the greater part going into Protestant places easily lost their faith, or neglected altogether the practice of their religion.

The spiritual interests of the Protestant children are provided for by the payment of a Chaplain out of the rates levied by the Vestry. A sense of justice has not yet caused a like advantage to be extended to the Catholics; yet it will surprise many to learn that out of 1213 children at present in the schools, the majority, or not less than 660, profess the Catholic Religion. The charity, however, of their fellow Catholic townsmen has not failed this destitute flock, and by means of collections in the different Churches, a maintenance is provided for a Priest to attend them.

To me your Lordship has committed this charge, and, while I am very sensible of the difficulties with which it is surrounded, I acknowledge with gratitude the kindness of

your Lordship, and the ready assistance and sympathy of the Catholics of Liverpool. This sympathy has been specially shown in the formation of the Committee, by whose aid Catholic situations are procured for the children, and thus one great source of danger to them is for the most part happily obviated.

During their residence in the schools the Catholic children have the advantage of almost daily instruction in their religion ; but, as all other teaching is in the hands of Protestants, this is the sole means by which the doctrines and practices of their faith can be brought before them.

To me, then, these poor forsaken little ones (who oftentimes have never known father or mother), look up for the bread of life, and in the wan face and languid eyes I see traces of that beautiful soul, which has so lately left its Maker's hands—a soul of whose priceless value men are unconscious, but which is an object of complacency to God and His angels. To cultivate in these souls the seed of faith, so that it may grow up to a fruitful maturity, is a work, on which much labour and patience may be very profitably bestowed.

It has been my object therefore, in the first place, to aim at acquiring a simple and familiar manner of expression, in order the better to engage the attention of the children. Hence the title of the present work, and the care

which has been taken to avoid the use of words and scholastic terms, little likely to be intelligible to so uninformed an audience.

Moreover, in a series of instructions extending over many years, I have had occasion to turn over these lessons in a number of ways, so as to view them in a variety of aspects. Hence I trust, that in the following explanations, no subject will be found to have been omitted, of which it is necessary to treat, though I cannot venture to hope that every thing has been said, which it is desirable to say.

If any apology is needed for bringing these notes before the public, it may be given in the words of a good priest, whom I have often heard say, "The older I grow, the more I am convinced that we cannot use too plain and simple language in catechising children,"—a sentiment which will be re-echoed by many, and which leads me to think, that this book may be of service to others engaged in similar labours.

Occasionally, examples from Scriptural and other sources have been introduced by way of illustration, though perhaps this portion of the work may be considered rather defective. It would have been easy to have selected a number of examples from French and other manuals, but these are for the most part ill suited to the taste of our people, which is somewhat fastidious in this respect.

It remains only to add that any profit arising from the sale of this book will be applied to placing out the Catholic children of the Kirkdale Industrial Schools in suitable situations.

All that is written in these volumes is humbly submitted to the judgment of the Church, and if anything be found at variance with her teaching, it is hereby retracted and condemned.

Begging your Lordship's blessing,

I remain,

Yours respectfully,

HENRY GIBSON.

220 BOOTLE LANE, LIVERPOOL,

*March 1st, 1865.*



# CATECHISM MADE EASY.

---

## FIRST INSTRUCTION.

---

### CHAPTER I.—*Of the Creation and End of Man.*

Q. Who made you ?

A. God.

Yes, Almighty God made you, my dear children. You did not make yourselves, nor did an Angel make you ; nor were you made by chance, which would be too foolish for any one to believe. It was *God* who made you ; that Great, All Powerful, Infinite, and Perfect Being, who made also the sun, the moon, and the stars, the earth and all that it contains, the Angels themselves,—in a word, all things that are made. “All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made.” \*

But *you* were not the first beings whom God made. Before he made you, he made the world for you to live in ; and, before he made the world, he made the Angels, who are beautiful spirits without bodies, far more wise, more powerful and more glorious than man. And why did Almighty God make the Angels ? Not because he had any need of them, for he had existed from all eternity alone in the universe, and nothing was wanting to his happiness or glory. But it was his blessed will to make them, that there

\* John i. 3.

might be some one to know him, love him, and honour him as he deserves, and to share in the infinite happiness which he enjoys. For this purpose he *created* them, that is, made them, by his Almighty Power, out of nothing ; and, having created them, he placed them in the beautiful abode of heaven, which he made to be their dwelling-place for all eternity. But as God is not only a God of Goodness, but also a God of Justice (a virtue which consists in giving every one his due), he could not, in accordance with his Justice, bestow upon them eternal possession of the delights of heaven before he had first tried their fidelity to him. He accordingly gave them an opportunity of meriting this happiness by an act of obedience. Sad to relate, a vast number of them, headed by Lucifer, one of the highest and most glorious of the heavenly spirits, rebelled against God, and were immediately cast down by him into the fire of hell, which he created to punish them. These wicked angels are called by the name of *devils*.

After this unhappy fall of the bad angels, Almighty God determined to fill up the places in heaven which they had lost by sin, and for this purpose he created another being, who is called man. But first he made the world and all that is in it, to be the dwelling-place and serve for the use of man. This great work he accomplished, as the holy Scripture tells us, in six days; though indeed he could, by his Almighty Power, have made it all in a single moment, had he so willed it. Having thus provided for the abode and subsistence of man, Almighty God, on the sixth and last day, created our first parents, Adam and Eve.

#### CREATION OF MAN.

And God said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth,

and every creeping thing that moveth upon the earth." And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure, wherein he placed man, whom he had formed.

And the Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself." Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and, when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. And Adam said, "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." And Adam called the name of his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.—Gen. i., ii., iii.

Q. Why did God make you?

A. To know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in the next.

*Why did God make you?* This is one of the most important questions that I could possibly ask you. Almighty God has made us and placed us in this world, and there is nothing more necessary for us than to know *why* he has done so. For when a person makes any thing, you know he has always some reason for making it,—he expects some good out of it; and if what he makes does not serve the purpose for which he made it, he is disappointed, and sorry that he has spent his time and trouble to so little purpose. For example, if one of you were to make a boat out of a piece of wood, and found it would not float in the water, or to make a top and found it would not spin, would you not be disappointed and tempted to say, "This is no good; it won't do what I made it for, so I will throw it into the fire?"

Let us now try to answer the question which I asked you just now, *Why did God make you?* Your catechism tells you that he made you to *know him*,

*love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him for ever in the next.* You see from this answer two things,—first, that God made you for Himself, to *know him, love him, and serve him*; and, secondly, that your own eternal happiness depends upon your doing what he made you for, since, if you do your best to know him, love him, and serve him in this world, he promises that you shall come to *be happy with him for ever* in the kingdom of heaven.

Do you now understand, my dear children, how great, how noble, and how excellent is the end for which God made you? Far different from his other creatures which you see about you, and which he made for your use and benefit, he has created *you* expressly for Himself. The sun he made to warm you and give you light; the birds, the fishes, and the beasts to provide you with food and clothing; the world to be your dwelling-place; but *you*, like the Angels, he created for Himself alone, to know him, love him, and serve him here, and to come to dwell with him for ever hereafter. Well might holy David exclaim, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, “What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little less than the Angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands.” \*

Let us now see what we have to do in order to fulfil the great end for which God has made us, and so to obtain the eternal reward he has promised us.

*First.*—We must *know* Almighty God, that is, we must know all about him that the Church teaches us. Now, this is what is contained in the catechism which you are about to learn. Be attentive, then, to

\* Ps. viii. 5—7,

the instructions which I am going to give you. Try to learn the answers well by heart, and, what is still more important, do your best to understand the meaning of them, and you will come to *know* all that is necessary about Almighty God.

*Secondly.*—We must *love* God. But how are you to learn to do this? God himself will teach you, if you ask him, and if he sees you trying to be good and obedient children. You should often, therefore, ask him to teach you to love him. “O my good God,” you should say to him, “teach me to love thee.” Besides, the more that you *know* of Almighty God and his Goodness, the more you are sure to *love* him; so that attention to your catechism is a great thing to help you to *love* God as well as to *know* him.

*Thirdly.*—You must not only know and love God, but you must also *serve* him. This you do by keeping his commandments, and doing what you know will please him. Now, these commandments are contained and explained in your catechism, so that the catechism teaches you also how to *serve* God.

You see from this that your catechism teaches you how to get to heaven, since it is by knowing, loving, and serving God here, that you are to come to be happy with him in the eternal kingdom of heaven.

#### STORY OF JOSAPHAT.

A prince, named Josaphat, had lost his way in a forest while hunting. Suddenly he heard some one, at a little distance, singing sweetly. Surprised to hear so lovely a voice in a lonely forest, he rode towards the spot from which the sound came, but was astonished to find that the voice which had so charmed him was that of a poor leper, whose body was in the last stage of decay. “Alas! my friend,” said the prince, “how can you have the courage to sing in this dreadful condition?” “My lord,” replied the leper, “I have every reason to rejoice. For forty years I have lived in this world, that is to say, my soul has been for forty

years confined in this body, which is its prison. The walls of this prison are now falling to pieces, and my soul, set free from these ruins, will soon take her flight towards God, to enjoy, in his company, eternal happiness. I am so overjoyed at this thought, that I cannot help raising my voice to heaven on this happy day of my deliverance."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

Q. To whose likeness did God make you?

A. To His own image and likeness.

Almighty God, having determined to create man, determined also to give him a being worthy of the noble end for which he made him. Wherefore, as a painter or artist who wishes to make a beautiful picture or statue, chooses always the most excellent and perfect pattern or model from which to copy, so did Almighty God, wishing to make man worthy of himself, choose the most perfect model, namely, Himself, after which to make him. "And God said, 'Let us make man to *our image and likeness.*'" \*

Often thank God, my dear children, for his Infinite Goodness in giving you so noble a being, and take care never to stain or deface his image, which he has stamped upon you, by any wilful sin.

Q. Is this likeness in your body or in your soul?

A. In my soul.

Almighty God made you, as you have seen, to his own image and likeness; but this likeness is *in your souls*, and not in your bodies. For you are made up, as you know, of soul and body, unlike the Angels, who have a soul or spirit only. It is your body which you see, touch, clothe, and feed; but it is your soul which gives life and motion to the body. As long as we are alive, the soul dwells in the body, though we cannot see it; but when we die, the soul is set free from the body, which returns to the dust, out of which God made it. You see, then, that it

\* Gen. i. 26

must be in our souls, and not in our bodies, that we are like Almighty God, for God is a pure Spirit, and has no body.

Q. How is your soul like to God?

A. Because my soul is a spirit and is immortal.

We come now to consider in what this likeness to God consists. How can these souls of ours, so prone to evil and so imperfect, contained, moreover, within so small a space as the human body, be in any way like to the Great God, who fills the universe, and possesses every possible perfection? And yet it is so, for God, in his wonderful Goodness, has stamped his image in the soul of man. In the same way, then, as a picture, painted by a clever artist, brings to your mind at once the person whom it represents, but yet there is always an immense difference between the person and the picture; so can we perceive at once in the human soul the image of God, though man remains still at an infinite distance from his Creator.

In what, then, does this likeness or resemblance consist? Your catechism tells you that it consists in these two points:—First, the soul is a *spirit*; God is a Spirit. Secondly, the soul is *immortal*; God is Eternal.

In the first place, the soul is a *spirit*, that is to say, a being without a body of its own, though it is sometimes joined to a body, and possessing reason and free will. Thus it is the soul in us which thinks, and reasons, and acts, and makes use of the different members and senses of the body, just as it requires. It sees with the eyes, hears with the ears, thinks and remembers with the brain, tells its thoughts with the tongue, and so of the other senses. In fact, it is the soul which does everything in us that we are said to do; for the body is of itself a lump of

senseless clay, and cannot do this or that, or move here or there, unless the soul sets it in motion. Do not you see in all this many points of likeness between the soul and God? I will tell you some of them.

The soul *is a spirit*, made of no material substance.

God *is a pure Spirit*, having no body.

The soul *is the life of the body*.

God *is the life of the world* and of the soul itself.

The soul *sees, hears, and knows* what passes near it; thus I see you move, hear you speak, and know what you are doing, in this room at least.

God *sees, hears, and knows* what takes place in the whole world. Not even the most secret thoughts of man are hidden from his sight.

The soul *remembers many things* that are long since gone by, but which it has once known.

God *knows all things*, both past and future. Past, present, and future are alike to God.

The soul *can choose with a free will* what it will do. For example, you can sit or stand, go there or stay here, as you have a will, for God has given you this free will, this power of choosing to do one thing rather than another among such things as man is able to do at all.

But God *is free to do all things* whatever he pleases, for His Power has no limits.

The soul of man *loves his parent, his friend, his benefactor*, or, at least, is capable of such love.

God *loves all his creatures* with an infinite love, and has loved them from all eternity.

Thus, our souls are made to the image of God, not only by being spirits, but by having the qualities of spirits—reason, knowledge, memory, free will, the power of loving, &c. It is true that these qualities in us fall infinitely short of the Divine Perfections, that is to say, the soul can do these things in an

infinitely less perfect way than that in which Almighty God does them ; but still she *can* do them, and so she bears a likeness to that Good God who has given her these admirable qualities.

We come now to the second great point in which the soul is like to God, that is, in being *immortal*.

Q. What do you mean when you say that your soul is immortal ?

A. I mean that my soul can never die.

Yes ; the meaning of the word *immortal* is that which *can never die* or is not liable to death. *Mortal*, on the contrary, means deadly, or what is liable to death. Hence we call ourselves with reason "poor mortals," because we are liable to death, as regards our bodies ; though we might also call ourselves immortal, speaking of our souls, because our souls will never die. If our first parents had not committed sin by eating of the forbidden fruit in the garden of paradise, our bodies would not die either, because Almighty God had placed in the midst of that garden a tree, called the tree of life, by eating of the fruit of which our bodies would have been preserved constantly in health and strength ; but by the sin of Adam and Eve death entered into the world. Do not, however, think that, when the body dies and is put into the grave, and becomes the food of worms, the soul dies too. No ; the soul continues to exist without the body until the day of the General Judgment, when God will raise up the body out of the dust, and unite it with the soul once more, to share in its eternal reward or punishment.

There is one kind of death, however, which the soul does die, and that is *the death of sin*. When we fall into mortal sin, our souls are dead in the sight of God, because they are deprived of God's grace and love, and are not able to do anything that

will get us a reward in heaven. They still continue to exist, it is true, but only for eternal punishment, unless God restores them to the life of grace by a miracle of his Goodness.

#### THE EMPEROR'S PET STAG.

A certain Roman emperor had a favourite stag, which he had succeeded in taming, and which had become much attached to its imperial master. During the day it roamed at large in the neighbouring forests, but returned at certain times to the palace to receive its food. Fearful that it might go astray, and that he might lose an animal which he prized so much, the emperor placed round its neck a golden collar, bearing the inscription, "Touch me not; I belong to Cesar." No one, he thought, would dare to steal or injure it, when they perceived that he had marked it for his own.

Now, Almighty God has acted to us in the same way as the Roman emperor to his pet stag. He has stamped his Divine image on our souls; our will, our memory, our understanding, our whole soul, all bear the mark that we come from God and belong to God. When, therefore, the devil presumes to attack us, let us bid him begone, saying, "Touch me not; I belong to God."—*Duty of a Christian.*

---

## SECOND INSTRUCTION.

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### CHAPTER I. CONTINUED.—*Of the Salvation of the Soul. Faith.*

Q. Of which must you take most care, of your body or of your soul?

A. Of my soul: for Christ has said, "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"—*Matt. xvi. 26.*

The soul being the noblest portion of man's nature, made to the image and likeness of God himself, and endowed with so many admirable qua-

lities, it stands to reason that we ought to take far more care of it than the body, which, though a beautiful work of God's hands, is, after all, without the soul, but a piece of senseless clay. But there is another reason why we should take far more care of the soul than of the body. If the soul is saved, the body will be saved too, and will enjoy, together with the soul, the eternal delights of heaven; but, if the soul be lost by sin, the body will have to endure, along with the soul, the eternal torments of hell. Wherefore our Blessed Lord, wishing to impress upon his disciples the importance of attending to the salvation of their souls above all things else, said to them one day, "*What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?*"

You see, then, my dear children, how senseless and mad those are who neglect their souls, and think only of pleasing and indulging their bodies. They spend days and weeks in foolish pleasures and empty vanities, or in heaping up riches, which in a short time they must leave behind them at the grave, and they cannot spare half-an-hour every day for their morning and night prayers, a short time on Sunday for hearing Mass and receiving instructions, or a few hours each month for going to Confession and Holy Communion. And yet these are the very things which, by helping to save the soul, would procure for the body also the eternal delights of heaven.

#### ST. IGNATIUS AND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.

At the time when St. Ignatius was pursuing his studies at Paris, he became acquainted with Francis Xavier, a gay young nobleman, who happened at that time to be studying at the same college. Ignatius, perceiving the noble qualities of mind and heart which his young friend possessed, was

bent upon gaining him to God; but as Xavier was at that time occupied only with thoughts of ambition and a desire of distinguishing himself in the world, Ignatius found that all his good advice was unavailing. He therefore contented himself with repeating to Xavier, from time to time, the words of our Blessed Lord, "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" Francis, who had at first treated the advice of Ignatius with contempt, and rallied him on his devout and mortified life, began at length seriously to reflect on the words which his friend so often repeated. Applying them to his own case, he began to ask himself what indeed it would profit him to obtain all his ambitious desires, if in the end he lost his soul amid the dangers of the world. This consideration made so deep an impression on the mind of Francis, that, following the impulse of Divine grace, he put himself under the direction of St. Ignatius, entered into the Society of Jesus, and became an illustrious saint and the apostle of the Indies.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

Q. What must you do to save your soul?

A. I must worship God by faith, hope, and charity; that is, I must believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him with my whole heart.

We have seen from the last answer that the salvation of our souls is of all things the most necessary, since, if we were to gain the whole world, it would profit us nothing at all, if at the same time we were to suffer the loss of our souls. Hence our blessed Lord calls the salvation of our souls the *one thing necessary*,\* because if we save our souls, *all* is saved; but if we lose them, all is lost for eternity. What, then, must we do to be sure of saving our souls? The catechism tells us that we *must worship God*, and that this worship consists of three things, namely, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*. For God has placed us in this world, as we have already seen, to know him, to love him, and to serve him, or, in other words, to worship him by Faith, Hope, and Charity, since it is by Faith that we know him, and by Hope and

\* Luke x. 42.

Charity that we love him and serve him. Therefore, the worship of God, that is to say, all religion, consists in these three virtues. They are the greatest of all the virtues, and contain in themselves all the others. They will, therefore, be all explained in your catechism, but at present we have only to speak of Faith, which comes before and is the foundation of the other two.

Q. What is faith?

A. It is to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed.

Q. Why must you believe whatever God has revealed?

A. Because God is the very truth, and cannot deceive or be deceived.

Faith is *to believe*. We see from this answer that another word for the virtue of Faith is Belief, in the same way as another word for Charity is Love. Hence you find that acts of faith, that is, prayers expressing our faith, usually begin with the words, "I believe." Thus the Apostles' Creed, which is an act of faith, begins with these words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." And the act of faith which comes among the three acts of faith, hope, and charity in your morning prayers, begins, "I firmly believe there is one God."

Faith, then, is *believing*. But what do we mean by believing? It is plain that we must understand this properly, or else we cannot know what is meant by Faith. To believe, my dear children, is *to receive a thing as true on the word of another*. If we know a thing of our own knowledge, for example, by seeing, hearing, feeling, or tasting, then that is not believing, but it is seeing, &c. Thus, if you took a bite of an orange and found it sour, so sour as to make you pull a long face, you would not say, "*I believe that this orange is sour,*" but "*Oh! this orange tastes very sour.*" But if, on the contrary,

I were to say, "Don't touch that orange, my child ; it is sour," and you were to take it for granted that it was so *on my word*, then that would be believing, because it would be receiving a thing as true on the word of another.

I have now explained to you what *believing* is ; but notice one very important thing, and it is this. You may believe a thing to be true, because *man* tells it you, or because *God* tells it you. If you believe it because man tells it you, it is a mere human belief, it is not the virtue of Faith. You feel pretty sure that it is, as the person tells you, but still you think it just possible he may have made a mistake. For example, if I told you, "That orange is sour," you would probably believe me, because you would not think it likely that I should tell you a story, but you would perhaps be inclined to indulge a doubt whether I might not be mistaken after all, as I had not tasted it. But if you believe anything on the word of Almighty God, then there is no room for doubt, no room for mistake. You take it at once for granted, *without doubting* it for a moment, because you know that God is Truth itself, and that it is impossible to suppose either that he could deceive you or be deceived himself. *Man* might be deceived or mistaken, and might even wish to mislead others ; but *God*, as he knows all things, could not be deceived, and, being Goodness, Holiness, Justice, and Truth itself, could not wish to deceive us. It is sufficient, therefore, to know that God has revealed anything, for us instantly to believe it. You will now understand what is necessary for the virtue of Faith.

*First.*—Our belief must be firm, unshaken, an absolute certainty, *without doubting* or wavering.

*Secondly.*—It must be a belief *in all that God has revealed* or made known to man.

## THE FIREMAN'S DAUGHTER.

A large number of children were assembled at their lessons in a public school-room a few years since, when suddenly an alarm was given that the house was on fire. The children ran here and there in the greatest terror, seeking everywhere for the means of escape, and one of the pupil teachers was so terrified that she threw herself from the window of the room, which was on the second story, into the street below. In the midst of the general alarm, it was remarked that one of the little girls never attempted to escape, and, though excessively pale and trembling, never stirred from the form where she was seated. When the alarm was discovered to be unfounded and order was again restored, the school-mistress asked the little girl how it was that she had sat so still the whole time, while every one else had been trying to escape. "Please ma'am," said she, "it's because father is a fireman, and has often told me, if ever there was an alarm of fire, to sit quite still."—*Newspaper.*

This little story will show you very clearly what *believing* is, and contains also a useful lesson for every Christian. The little girl, though very frightened, knew it was better to sit still, and how did she know it? Because *her father* had told her so, and he was a *fireman*. Being her father, he loved her too much, and being a fireman, he was too clever to deceive her. She therefore never doubted the truth of what he told her. This was *believing*, but it was only *human faith*, because it was *man* whom she believed and not God.

Learn, my dear children, from the example of this little girl, to cherish in your hearts the truths which your Heavenly Father teaches you by his Church, and to follow as faithfully His instructions as the fireman's daughter did the warnings of her earthly father. In doing so you are exercising *Divine Faith*; since it is *God* whom you believe, God, who being your Father, would not deceive you, and cannot be mistaken, because he knows all things.

## THE MAN BORN BLIND.

It is related in the Gospel, that when our Blessed Redeemer had cured the blind man at the pool of Siloe, the Pharisees through envy and jealousy persecuted him, who had been cured, and expelled him from their church or synagogue. At that time he did not yet know that our Blessed Lord was the Christ and the Son of God, but thought only that he was some good and holy prophet. When Jesus, however, had heard that they had cast him out, "he said to him, *Dost thou believe in the Son of God?* He answered and said, *Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?* And Jesus said to him, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.* And he said, *I believe, Lord;* and falling down he adored him."—*John ix.*

Behold here a beautiful example of Divine Faith, and of that prompt and entire belief which is due to the word of God. The blind man, who already regarded our Blessed Lord as a prophet or messenger from God, no sooner heard from him that he was the Son of God himself, than he expressed his belief, fell down and adored him, and remained to listen to his Divine teaching.

Q. How are you to know what the things are which God has revealed?

A. By the testimony and authority of the Catholic Church, which Christ has appointed to teach all nations.

Almighty God, who has created us to *know* him, and has commanded us to worship him by the virtue of Faith, has not left us without the means of learning what those truths are which he requires us to believe. First of all, he spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden of paradise; then to the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; afterwards to Moses on Mount Sinai; and later on he taught the Jews by the mouth of his inspired prophets and by the Jewish Church. But all this was only to prepare the way for his Divine Son, who came to teach us more fully by his life and public preaching, and to establish his

Church, which should continue to teach in his name till the end of time.

While our Blessed Lord was still upon earth, he himself taught Divine truth to mankind by word of mouth ; but, as he was not to remain always visibly here below, it entered into the order of his Providence to commit to others the charge of continuing the same work, when He should have ascended into heaven. For this purpose he chose from among those who came to listen to his Divine teaching, twelve disciples, called Apostles, whom he ordained priests, and to whom he gave power to say Mass, administer the sacraments, and teach to all mankind what they had to believe, and what they had to do, in order to gain heaven. Among these Apostles he appointed one, viz., St. Peter, in his own place, to be the head of the others, and gave him authority to rule and govern His Church. Thus did our Blessed Lord found and establish his Church ; and, as he established it not for the people of that time only, but for all future ages, he gave his Apostles power to ordain bishops and priests after them, as they had been ordained by Him, who should exercise the same powers, and continue the same work of teaching and administering the sacraments until the end of time.

You see then from this, my dear children, that there can be only one true religion, namely that founded by Jesus Christ. This is, as you know, the Catholic religion, to which you have the happiness to belong, since the Catholic Church alone comes down from the time of the Apostles, and acknowledges the Pope, the successor of the Apostle St. Peter, as its visible head. It is this Church, which, as your catechism says, gives *testimony*, that is to say, bears witness, as to what was taught by Christ and his Apostles ; and it is *her* pastors, the bishops and priests, the successors of the Apostles, who alone

have *authority* from Christ to *teach all nations* in his name. "As the Father hath sent me," he said to his Apostles, "I also send you.\* Going, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."†

#### ST. JOHN AND ST. POLYCARP.

Our Blessed Lord predicted, before his Passion, that the days would quickly come, when false teachers would arise and make every effort to mislead his disciples. Even in the lifetime of the Apostles this prophecy was fulfilled, for we read in the life of St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, that he wrote his Gospel to refute the errors of Ebion and Cerinthus, who had attacked the doctrine of our Blessed Lord's Incarnation. It is related by St. Irenæus, who says he heard it from the mouth of St. Polycarp, one of St. John's disciples, that that holy Apostle one day entered one of the Roman baths, not knowing that the heretic or false teacher Cerinthus was at that very moment within the building. Being informed however of this circumstance, in order to inspire his disciples with a wholesome horror of false doctrine, which is so grievous a sin in the sight of God, he hastily fled away, saying, "Let us haste and begone, my brethren, lest the building, which contains Cerinthus, the enemy of the Truth, should fall upon our heads."

So Polycarp, St. John's disciple, showed the same horror of false teachers as his blessed master. Meeting one day in the streets of Rome the heretic Marcion, with whom he had in former times been very friendly, he passed him by without noticing him, Marcion, thinking that he had not observed him, came up and said to him, "Do you not know me, Polycarp?" "Yes," replied the holy bishop, "I know you to be the first-born of Satan."

From these examples we see what the Apostles and Saints thought of those who presumed to call in question the testimony and authority of the Church of God.—*Butler's Lives of the Saints.*

\* John xx, 21. † Matt. xxviii. 19, 20,

## THIRD INSTRUCTION.

CHAPTER II.—*The Apostles' Creed. First Article.*  
*God the Father. Existence and Nature of God.*

Q. What are the chief things which God has revealed ?

A. Those which are contained in the Apostles' Creed.

You have already learnt, my dear children, that God has made you to know him, love him, and serve him ; also, that it is Faith which teaches us how to know God, and that Faith is "believing on the word of God what he has revealed or made known to man." Now, it is by the Church, which his Divine Son founded and established on earth, that God makes known to us what those things are which he requires us to believe. The Apostles, who were the first pastors of the Church, received these truths from the lips of Jesus Christ himself, and have handed them down to their successors and to us. Some of the most important and necessary of these truths *are contained in the Apostles' Creed*, or "I believe," which was, there is little doubt, composed by the Apostles themselves. It is said that they made it before they separated to preach over the world, and that they agreed to teach it everywhere to those whom they converted, as a solemn act of faith. The room, or rather cave, where they are said to have assembled on this occasion, is still pointed out in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and is visited with great veneration. From that day to this, the Apostles' Creed has been used among Christians in every country and in every age. Even Protestants and Methodists make use of it, for they believe with us that it came

down from the time of the Apostles. It is called *Creed*, from the Latin word *credo*, meaning 'I believe;' so that the Apostles' Creed means, in other words, the Belief, or act of faith taught by the Apostles.

Say the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;—and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;—who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;—suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;—He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead;—He ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;—from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.—I believe in the Holy Ghost;—the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of Saints;—the forgiveness of sins;—the resurrection of the body;—and life everlasting.—Amen.

I told you just now, that the Apostles' Creed is a solemn act or profession of our faith, namely that we believe the same truths which our Blessed Lord taught to his Apostles. When you were little infants, and were taken to the church to be baptised, you were first asked by the priest whether you believed all the truths which are contained in the Apostles' Creed, for no one can become the child of God by Baptism, until he first receives the teaching of Jesus Christ and his Church. As you had not then sense enough to answer for yourselves, your godfather and godmother answered for you, that you did believe, and, as a proof of it, repeated in your name, in a loud voice, the 'I believe.' Since that time you have learnt to repeat it yourselves, and have been taught to say it daily in your morning and night prayers, in order that the truths which are contained in it may be continually before your eyes, and may sink deeply into your hearts.

You do not know, I daresay, that there are other creeds, or professions of faith, besides the Apostles'

Creed. These have been composed by the Church at different times to express our belief more fully in doctrines contained in the Apostles' Creed, which have been denied, or called in question, by wicked men. Have you ever heard any of these creeds? Yes, you have heard one very often; I mean the Nicene Creed, for it is frequently said by the priest at Mass, at that part of the Mass when all the people are standing up after the gospel. I daresay you remember the first words of it, "Credo in unum Deum," "I believe in one God." It is called the Nicene Creed, because it was composed at the council or assembly of Catholic Bishops, which was held at Nicæa about three hundred years after the time of our Blessed Lord. There is also the Athanasian Creed, and the Creed of Pope Pius. These creeds are longer than the Apostles' Creed, because they contain a fuller explanation of Catholic doctrine, but they are just the same in substance. Thus the Apostles' Creed says,—

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."

The Nicene Creed says,—

"I believe in *one* God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, *and of all things visible and invisible.*"

The words *one* and *of all things visible and invisible* were added by the Church to confute the Manichees and other heretics, who denied that there is only one God, and asserted that God created only *invisible* things, such as our souls, and that all *visible* things, that is, things which can be seen, were made by an evil spirit.

In the same way the Athanasian Creed was composed by the great St. Athanasius, to explain the true teaching of the Church against the Arians, and the Creed of Pope Pius to express the belief of the

Church in those points of doctrine which had been called in question by Protestants.

Q. How is the Apostles' Creed divided ?

A. Into twelve parts or articles.

The Apostles' Creed is divided *into twelve parts*, which are called *articles*. Each of these articles contains an expression of faith in some great truth which God has revealed or made known to us. Of these truths, or articles of our faith, some relate to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and some to other doctrines of the Church.

First of all, we declare our belief in what the Church teaches us about God the Father, and this is contained in the first article, "I believe, &c."

In the next six articles we profess our faith in God the Son, and in all that the Church teaches us regarding Him. We have more to know and believe about God the Son, because he has made himself more known to us by becoming man. Thus,

The second article declares who he is ;

The third, how he became man ;

The fourth relates his Passion and Death ;

The fifth, his Resurrection ;

The sixth, his Ascension ;

The seventh, his coming at the last day to judge us.

We next, in the eighth article, profess our belief in the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Holy Ghost.

After thus making an act of faith in the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and what the Church teaches us regarding them, we, in the four remaining articles, declare our belief in some of the most important doctrines of the Church. The most important of all is put first in the ninth article :

“The Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints.”

This article indeed may be said to contain the whole Creed in itself; for if we believe in the Catholic Church, we believe in all that she teaches, and the whole of the Creed is about that.

Next comes “the forgiveness of sins” in the tenth article; “the resurrection of the body” in the eleventh, and “life everlasting,” the reward and crown of our faith in the last.

When you repeat, my dear children, every morning and evening, this beautiful act of faith, you should do so with hearts full of gratitude to God for teaching you how to *know* him by these Divine truths, and with a firm determination to live and die in the bosom of that Holy Catholic Church, which he has established to teach and explain them to mankind.

Q. What is the first article of the Creed?

A. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

In the first article of the Creed we express our belief in what the Church teaches us about God the Father. We must believe—

*First.*—That he is truly *God*;

*Secondly.*—That he is the *Father*, the first Person of the Blessed Trinity.

*Thirdly.*—That he is *Almighty*, that is, all-powerful.

*Fourthly.*—That he is *the Creator of heaven and earth*.

There are other things which we know and believe about God the Father, but these are the chief and most important. The catechism, therefore, goes on to explain these truths one by one.

Q. What is God ?

A. God is the Supreme Spirit, who exists of Himself and is infinite in all perfections.

*What is God?* This is a question, my dear children, which has puzzled all the philosophers and wise men who have tried to discover an answer to it by the light of human reason alone; for though human reason may be able to give us some indistinct knowledge of God, it is God alone who can fully teach mankind what He is, neither has he left us in ignorance of what it is necessary for us to know in regard to Himself. First of all, he taught our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the garden of Paradise, that he is the One Only God, who made all things, and whom we should ever adore and obey; and our first parents handed down the knowledge of this great truth to their children. But, as time went on, the greater part of men became very wicked and corrupt. Their minds became darkened by sin, they lost the knowledge of the true God, and they began to make gods for themselves, according to their own foolish fancies. Thus, some said that the sun and moon were gods; others, that great men who had lived on the earth, when they died, became gods; others, that the earth itself was a god; others again, that beasts and serpents,—nay, even the very trees and vegetables were gods. And not content with adoring as gods creatures which Almighty God had made to serve for their use and benefit, men went on in their blindness to make gods for themselves out of wood and stone and metal, which they carved into certain shapes and figures, called idols, and then adored and worshipped as gods. Thus did man fall away from the knowledge of God, and, in punishment of his own vices and wilful obstinacy, became a slave to the grievous sin of *idolatry*, that is to say, the worship of false gods and idols. But there was

always the light of the true religion enlightening the world, and teaching those, who were willing to be taught, all those truths which God had made known about himself. These truths are contained in the answer of your catechism, which you have just repeated.

First of all, *God is the Supreme Spirit*. But what is a spirit? I told you a little time ago that a spirit is a being possessing understanding and free will, that is, the power of knowing and willing, but without a body. It has therefore neither shape, nor size, nor colour, nor any of the properties of a body. Our souls are spirits, the Angels are spirits, God is a Spirit; but, oh! what a vast difference between Almighty God and all other spirits, which are the work of his Divine Hands! For He is not, like our souls, confined within a little body, nor, like the Angels, present only in certain places; nor is He, like both one and the other, subject to or dependent on any one; but He is the One Great Spirit, who fills the whole universe, and who rules and governs all things, wherefore he is called the *Supreme* or *Highest Spirit*.

*Secondly.*—*God alone exists of Himself*. All things have their being or existence from God, but God from no one. God made all things, but no one made God. And not only did God give us our being when he made us, but he is continually giving it us; for, were it not for Him ever supporting and upholding us, we should in a moment fall back into that nothing out of which he made us. Hence, the Holy Scripture says that “in Him we live, and move, and be.”\* But, as to Almighty God, nothing upholds or supports Him, for He is Being itself, giving being and existence to all his creatures.

*Thirdly.*—*God is infinite in all perfections*,—that

\* Acts, xvii. 28.

is to say, not only is he Good, Wise, Powerful, &c., but his Goodness, Wisdom, and Power have no bound or limit; in other words, he is All Good, All Wise, All Powerful, and so of his other perfections. For these, namely, Goodness, Wisdom, Power, &c., are what are called the Perfections of God. We call them good *qualities* when we speak of man, but when we speak of God we call them *perfections*. But notice, my dear children, that whatever wisdom, power, goodness, or other good quality man may possess, it is only very small and limited, and, besides, it comes from God. God, on the other hand, possesses all these perfections in an infinite degree, that is, without limit or bound. Moreover, He possesses them of his own nature, they belong to Him of his own right,—nay, they are God Himself.

#### THE BURNING BUSH.

When Moses was keeping the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro, he came to Mount Horeb, which is called in Holy Scripture the *Mountain of God*. Here the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and Moses saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt. And he said, "*I will go and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.*"

"And when the Lord saw that he went forward to see, He called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said *Moses, Moses*. And he answered, *Here I am*. And he said, *Come not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*. Moses hid his face, for he durst not look at God."

Then the Lord told him that He had seen the affliction of His people in Egypt, and was about to send him to deliver them from their oppressors, and lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Then Moses said to God, "'Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them, *The God of your fathers hath sent me to you*. If they should say to me, *What is his name?* what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses '*I am who am*. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, *He who is hath sent me to you.*'"—*Exod. iii.*

*I am who am.* Beautiful words, my dear children, which show us at once the Greatness of God and our own littleness. *God is what he is* by his own nature and Power. But "I am," each of us might say, "not what I am, for I am nothing, and have no being or existence of myself, but simply and only what God made me."

#### KING HIERO AND THE PHILOSOPHER.

Hiero, king of Syracuse, being eager in the pursuit of wisdom, one day asked the philosopher Simonides, "What is God?" Simonides requested to be allowed a day to consider his answer. On the following day the king repeated his question, but the philosopher begged for another day, saying that he had not been yet able to discover the answer. Being again asked on the third day, he requested a further delay, and having done the same for several days in succession, he at length excused himself altogether, saying, "The more I think of this sublime subject, the less I am able to explain it."—*Cicero*.

#### THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON.

The great Emperor Napoleon, in the days of his prosperity and his earthly glory, thought little of God, or of the practice of his religious duties. He was not, however, without faith, and afterwards, in the solitude of his captivity at St. Helena, became convinced of the vanity of the world, and returned to the practice of his religion. It was then that he made that beautiful answer to some one who asked him which had been the happiest day of his life. Was it the day of his victory at Lodi, or of that at Marengo; or was it rather the day of his triumphal entrance into Dresden or Vienna? "You are mistaken," he replied; "it was not any of these days, it was the day of my first Communion."

It happened one day that one of his officers, in his presence, impiously mocked at religion, and asked him, in a jesting way, how he could believe that there was a God, when he had never seen him. "Listen, and I will tell you," said Napoleon. "You say that I have a talent or genius for war. When we used to go to battle, if there was any important movement to be made, you were the first to come and look for me, and everyone cried out, 'Where is the Emperor?'"

And why so? It was because you trusted in my genius; yet you had never seen it. Did you, then, doubt its existence? No, because you had seen its effects. My victories proved that it existed, and hence no one called it in question. But which of my victories could be compared to any of the wonders of the creation, which all bear testimony to the existence of God? What military movement can bear any comparison with the movement of the heavenly bodies? My victories made you believe in me; the universe makes me believe in God.”—*Derniers Moments de Napoléon*.

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## FOURTH INSTRUCTION.

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*First Article—Continued. The Perfections of God. His Omnipotence, Eternity, Omnipresence, and Omniscience.*

Q. Why is He called Almighty?

A. Because He can do all things. “With God all things are possible.”—*Matt. xix. 26*.

God is All Powerful, my dear children, and it is for this reason that we speak of him as the *Almighty* God. It is his Divine Son Himself, who declares that “*with God all things are possible.*” In other words, *he can do all things* whatever he pleases, however difficult or impossible they may appear to man. What could appear more difficult than to make the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars? And yet God made them all out of nothing in an instant of time. “He spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created.”\* He said, “*Be light made*, and light was made; *let the waters be gathered together in one place*, and it was so done.”† At his word, in a moment of time, all the heavenly bodies moved

\* Ps. cxlviii. 5.

† Gen. i. 3, 9.

in their appointed courses ; the whole earth was covered with a countless variety of herbs and shrubs and trees ; the sea was peopled with fish, the air with birds, and the land with living animals, and man, the masterpiece of God's hands. How weak and feeble are all the efforts of man compared with these wonderful works of the Great Creator ! With all his power and skill, what man can make a blade of grass ?—much less a living animal,—not even a gnat or a fly !

But is there nothing at all, you may perhaps ask, which God cannot do ? Yes, there is one thing ; God cannot sin. Could he do this, he would be no longer God, for God is Holiness itself, which is the very opposite of sin. Besides, sin is an imperfection, and to be able to commit it would not show that God is Powerful, but, on the contrary, would prove him to be weak, since it would show that God might be overcome by the devil, the author of sin.

#### CANUTE'S REBUKE TO HIS COURTIER.

The flatterers of King Canute, eager to gain the royal favour, styled him not only King of England, but Lord of the sea ; “the very elements,” they said, “were subject to his command.” Wishing to read them a lesson, Canute ordered his chair of state to be placed at the edge of the water, and there took his seat. The tide was then coming up, and the King, in a tone of majesty, ordered it to retire, that it might not wet its lord and master. The waves, however, advanced rapidly, and soon flowed over the King's knees. Then, rising and turning to his confused nobles, Canute said to them, “Confess how vain and empty is the power of an earthly king compared with His, who alone can say to the waves, *Thus far shall ye go, and no further.* Then, taking the crown off his head, he went and deposited it on the great crucifix in the cathedral of Winchester, nor did he ever again wear it. From that day forward he studied only to advance in humility and meekness, and ended a glorious reign by a saintly death.—*History of England,*

Q. Why is he called Creator of heaven and earth ?

A. Because He made heaven and earth and all things out of nothing by His only word.

God *made heaven and earth and all things out of nothing by his only word*. This is the plain and simple truth, which God himself has revealed to us respecting the creation. The world, then, was made by God ; it did not make itself, nor was it made by chance, as some philosophers have foolishly said. For how could the world make itself, or have existence, unless it had received it from another ? Or how could this vast and beautiful universe, those magnificent heavenly bodies, the countless living animals with which the earth is peopled, and man himself, have been made by chance, which is nothing ? Did chance ever make the spring and wheels of a watch, put them together, and cause them to tell the time ? Or did chance ever build a house and furnish it ? If, then, it requires an intelligent being, that is, a being capable of thinking and knowing, to make a watch or build a house, much more does it require an Almighty and All Wise Being to make this vast universe and all that it contains !

God then made the world, or, rather, he *created* it. For to create is to make out of nothing, which only God can do. Man requires bricks and mortar to build a house, silver and brass to make a watch, wood to construct a ship, &c. But God *made all things out of nothing by his only word*. He made *heaven*, that is to say, that beautiful place where the Saints and Angels dwell, as also the sky above, which we sometimes call heaven, and those bright heavenly bodies the sun, the moon, and the stars, which shed light and heat into this world of ours. He also made the *earth*, where we dwell, clothed it with fresh and beautiful verdure, and peopled it with various animals and with man himself.

Admire, my dear children, the infinite Power and Wisdom of God as shown in the creation ; love and thank him for his goodness in creating so many wonders for your use ; and be afraid ever to offend so Great and Mighty a God by wilful sin.

#### THE CREATION IN SIX DAYS.

FIRST DAY.—“In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep ; and the spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said, *Be light made.* And light was made. And God divided the light from the darkness. And he called the light Day, and the darkness Night.”

SECOND DAY.—“And God said, *Let there be a firmament made amidst the water, and let it divide the waters from the waters.* And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.”

THIRD DAY.—“God also said, *Let the waters that are under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.* And it was so done. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called Seas. And God said, *Let the earth bring forth the green herb and the fruit tree.* And it was so done.”

FOURTH DAY.—“And God said, *Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven to divide the day and the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.* And it was so done. And God made two great lights, a greater light to rule the day, and a lesser light to rule the night, and the stars.”

FIFTH DAY.—“God also said, *Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature, and the fowl, that may fly over the earth.* And God created the great whales, and every living and moving creature which the waters bring forth, and every winged fowl. And he blessed them, saying, *Increase and multiply.*”

SIXTH DAY.—“And God said, *Let the earth bring forth the cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth.* And it was so done. And he said, *Let us make man to our image and likeness ; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth.* And God created man to his own image ; to the image of God he created him ; male and female he created them.”

SEVENTH DAY.—“And on the seventh day God ended the work which he had made ; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. And he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.”—*Gen. i.—ii.*

Q. Had God any beginning ?

A. No ; He always was, He is, and He always will be.

God alone had no beginning, my dear children ; *He always was, He is, and He always will be.* From all eternity he existed, and he will continue to exist for ever. We also shall exist for ever, for He has made us in this to his own likeness. Our souls, as you have seen, are immortal, and can never die ; and when our bodies rise again at the last day, they will be immortal too, and will go with our souls to eternal happiness or eternal misery. But God is more than immortal ; he is *Eternal*. Not only *will* he exist for ever, but he *has* existed for ever. He had no beginning, and he will have no end. All other things had a beginning. There was a time when neither this earth, nor the sun, moon, or stars, nor angels, nor men, existed ; but there never was a time when God did not exist. From all eternity He existed alone in the universe. At length, in his Goodness, he began to create, and made first the Angels, and then the world, and man. Before God began to create, time was not counted ; nor will it be counted after the day of judgment. And even now there is no time in regard to God himself ; everything past, present, and to come, is equally present to him.

How thankful ought we to be to our good God, who has created us, not for the few miserable years that we shall spend in this life, but for eternity, which will be an eternity of happiness for us, if we love him now, and keep his commandments !

Q. Where is God ?

A. God is everywhere.

Yes ; Almighty God is *everywhere* present, and he is everywhere equally present. He is not more present in heaven, where the Angels and Saints see, love, and enjoy him, than he is in this room ; only he is visible to them and invisible to us. We cannot see him, because God is a Spirit, and a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes ; but he is no less truly present wherever we are, and, indeed, it is to the presence of God that we owe our being and preservation. For nothing can exist out of God ; it is God who upholds and supports all his creatures by his Presence and Power. Wherefore the Holy Scripture says that it is “in Him we live, and move, and be.”\*

If, then, my dear children, you were to take a ship and cross the sea, or mount a camel and pass over the desert, or even if you could take wings and fly to the very end of the world, Almighty God would be with you wherever you went, and wherever you came to, you would find yourself in the presence of God. Nay, if you could mount to the moon, to the sun, or to the stars, whose distance is so great that it cannot be calculated, still you could not go out of the presence of God, but everywhere would you find Almighty God filling all space, and yet present equally in every portion of it, with all his Divine perfections. Wherefore holy David says beautifully, in one of the Psalms,

“Whither shall I go from thy spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy face ?

“If I ascend into heaven, thou art there ;

“If I descend into hell, thou art present ;

“If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there

\* Acts, xvii. 28.

also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." \*

See, then, how much reason the good have to rejoice, since they have Him always with them who is their Friend and their Father; and how much reason the wicked have to tremble, since they are ever in the presence of an Almighty and infinitely Just God, whom they have disobeyed and insulted !

#### WHERE GOD IS, AND WHERE HE IS NOT:

A priest was one day catechising a number of children, and, among other things, he asked a little boy the question I have just asked you, *Where is God?* "Come, my child," said the priest, "tell me where God is, and I will give you an orange." "Father," replied the boy, "I will give you two, if you will tell me where he is not."—*Anecdotes Chrétiennes.*

Q. Does God know and see all things ?

A. Yes ; God does know and see all things, even our most secret thoughts.

Almighty God, being everywhere present, and being a God of Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Knowledge, it follows that there is nothing of which he can be ignorant, or which can be hidden from His sight. Not only does he know and see outward things, such as our words and actions, but even the most secret thoughts of our hearts. Hence, the Holy Scripture says that "the eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts."† It matters not, therefore, whether you be alone or with your companions, at home or in the streets, in the daylight or in the darkness, God sees you everywhere, and beholds all your thoughts, words, and actions.

Since, then, my dear children, you are ever living under the Eye of God, how careful should you be

\* Ps. cxxxviii. 7—10.

† Eccles. xxiii. 28.

not to do anything that you would not wish God to behold ! How thoughtful and attentive should this make you at your prayers ! how kind and good-natured with your companions ! how modest and well-behaved when alone or with others ! how careful to put away any temptation that presents itself ! These few words, *God sees me*, should sink deep into your hearts, and you should call them to mind whenever you are tempted to sin, according to the example of holy David. Listen to his words :

“ And I said, ‘ Perhaps darkness shall cover me, and night shall be my light in my pleasures ; ’

“ But darkness shall not be dark to Thee, and night shall be light as the day. The darkness thereof and the light thereof are alike to Thee.” \*

#### ST. THAIS THE PENITENT.

St. Thais, who, like St. Mary of Egypt, from a sinner became a saint through the perfect practice of penance, had the misfortune, in her youth, to be led away into a criminal and abandoned life. The holy abbot Paphnucius, hearing of her sad condition, and of the scandal given to others by her wicked conduct, was inspired by God to undertake her conversion. He accordingly visited her in disguise, and asked to speak to her privately. She showed him into a room, where she said they would meet with no interruption. Paphnucius, however, asked if she had not a more retired apartment. She conducted him to one, but he expressed himself still dissatisfied, asking if there was not a room where they would be out of sight and hearing of everyone. “ I assure you,” replied Thais, “ no room can be more retired ; no man can possibly see or hear us.” “ And what of God ? ” said Paphnucius. “ Is there no place where we can escape altogether from his All Seeing Eye ? ” “ Alas ! no,” replied Thais, casting herself at the feet of Paphnucius, whom she now perceived to be a servant of God. The holy man hereupon spoke to her so forcibly on the presence of God and the terrors of the Divine judgment, that Thais, detesting her wicked life, made a bonfire of all her worldly ornaments, and,

\* Ps. cxxxviii. 11, 12.

retiring into the desert, spent the rest of her life in the practice of the most austere penance.—*Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*

#### THE BROTHER AND SISTER.

A little boy and girl, named James and Anne, being left one day alone in the house, grew tired of play, and began to think of what they should next do to amuse themselves. "Come," said James, "let us go and look for something nice to feast upon." "I will go very willingly," said Anne, "if you will take me somewhere where no one will see us." "Very well," said James; "we will go to the pantry where the milk is kept and drink the cream." "No," said his sister, "I cannot go there, for there is a man working in the street, and he will be sure to see us." "Well, then," said James, "come with me to the kitchen. There are some nice pots of jam there for making tarts, and we will take some." "But don't you know," said Anne, "that our neighbour's daughter sits sewing at the window, and she can easily see into our kitchen." "Come, then," said James, "to the cellar; there are apples there, and no one can see us in that dark hole." "Oh! my dear brother," said Anne, "there is an Eye that can pierce the thickest walls and see into the darkest places." James blushed, and, turning to his sister, said, "You are right, Anne; God is everywhere present, and we cannot go out of his sight. I don't want now to do what I asked you to do five minutes ago. Our Mother Mary and our guardian Angels have been watching over us, to preserve us from sin. Come, Anne, let us thank them for putting into your mind what you have said to me."

Anne was now quite happy, and gave her brother a picture with the Eye of God surrounded by rays, and these words beneath:

Thy eye, O God, is fixed on me;  
May mine be ever turned to thee.

James kept it carefully, and looked at it whenever he was tempted to do wrong. God then gave him grace to overcome the temptation, and he grew up a virtuous and happy boy.

Q. Has God any body?

A. No; God is a pure spirit.

Almighty God has no body, for he is a *pure spirit*; that is to say, he is a spirit only, and not partly a spirit and partly a body, as we are. You see, then,

that the word *pure*, in this place, does not mean clean or white, as it often does; but it means “not mixed with anything else,” as we say of water when it is not mixed with wine or any other liquid, that it is pure water; but when it is mixed, we say that it is no longer pure. Now, our souls are not pure spirits, in this sense, because they are mixed up, as it were, with our bodies; but the Angels are, because they have no bodies.

As Almighty God, then, is a pure spirit, it follows that we cannot have any true picture of God, because he has no form or body to be painted; but we may have a picture of God made man, because then he had the form and body of man. And whenever God is painted in any form, or spoken of as having one, it is either because he has sometime taken that form to show himself to man, as, for example, the form of a dove, or it is to make us understand better something about God; as, when God is represented by an eye looking down on the earth, it is to remind us that God knows and sees everything that passes in the world.

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## FIFTH INSTRUCTION.

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*First Article—Continued. The Unity and Trinity of God.*

Q. Are there more Gods than one?

A. No; there is but one God.

*There is but one God.* This is the first and most necessary truth for a Christian to be instructed in. It is one of those four truths, without the knowledge

and belief of which, it is probable that no one can be saved. In like manner, it is necessary to know and believe—

That there are three Persons in this one God ;

That God the Son became man and died to redeem us ; and

That God will one day reward the good and punish the wicked.

As the knowledge of these truths is so strictly necessary, it is a great charity, my dear children, to teach them to any one who does not know them. You perhaps think that there is no one so ignorant as not to know this much ; but, alas ! there are many, even at the present day, who are ignorant of some one or other of these truths.

There is, then, one God, and only one God, who made us and all things. This truth Almighty God made known, first of all, to Adam and Eve. But soon after the fall of our first parents, when men began to increase and multiply, and, at the same time, to commit all kinds of wickedness, they forgot what God had taught them about Himself, and began to adore a number of false gods, whom they made or fancied for themselves. Thus they had Jupiter, whom they called god of heaven ; Neptune, god of the sea ; Pluto, god of the infernal regions, and many others. Then they had goddesses, as well as gods, such as Minerva, goddess of wisdom ; Venus, of beauty, &c. Some of these gods were adored in one country, and some in another ; and, even at the present day, there are false gods and goddesses like these worshipped in some parts of the world. Yet, if men were not willingly blind, they might easily see that it is absurd to suppose that there are many gods, since to be God is to be Lord and Master of all. Now, there cannot be two lords and masters of everything ; for if each were master of everything,

he would be master of the other also, so that neither of them could be God.

We read in the early history of the Church of a body of heretics, called Manichees, who taught that there are two Gods, one the author of good, and the other the author of evil. For they could not understand how there could be any evil in the world, if it were all the work of an infinitely Good and Perfect God. But they forgot that sin, which is the only real evil there is in the world, is not the work of God, but of man himself, who, when he sins, abuses his free will, which God has given him to enable him to merit heaven.

#### WHO MADE THE DEVILS.

“Who made the Angels?” asked a priest one day, when he was catechising a number of children. “God,” they all answered in a moment. “And who made the devils?” he continued. They were silent, and looked at each other, for no one liked to say that God made the devils. At length a little boy ventured to speak: “Father,” said he, “God made the Angels, and the Angels made themselves devils.”—*Guillois.*

Q. Are there more Persons than one in God?

A. Yes, in God there are three Persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Q. Are these three Persons, then, three Gods?

A. No; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all one and the same God.

*In God there are three Persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost;—and yet there are not three Gods, but One. This is the second of those four great truths, the knowledge and belief of which is necessary for salvation. The first is, that there is only One God; and the second, that in this one God there are three Persons. These three Persons are sometimes called the first, second, and*

third Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and sometimes God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

You will notice that, in speaking of these three Divine Persons, we give to each the title of God, which belongs to each by nature. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God ; and yet there are not three Gods, but One God in three distinct Persons. That is to say, the Father is not the Son, for the Son is born or begotten of the Father ; neither is the Holy Ghost the same as the Son or the Father, for he proceeds from them, yet each of the three is God, whole and entire ; or, as the catechism says, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all one and the same God.* The nature of God, therefore, is not divided ; but the *Persons* in God are separate and distinct. In like manner, the perfections of God, that is to say, his Goodness, Wisdom, All-Power, &c., are not divided, but each of the Divine Persons possesses each of these perfections whole and entire. The Father is All Powerful, the Son is All Powerful, the Holy Ghost is All Powerful, and it is the same with every other perfection ; and yet there are not three all powerful, three all wise, three all good, &c., but One All Powerful, All Wise, and infinitely Good God in three distinct Persons. Again, though we believe that God the Son is born or begotten of the Father from all eternity, and that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son, we do not believe that the Father existed before the Son, or that the Son and the Father existed before the Holy Ghost, but that all the three Divine Persons are equally eternal, alike without beginning and without end. All this, my dear children, is far beyond our poor, weak, limited understandings. It is sufficient for us that God teaches it ; all we have to do is to believe and adore.

## BAPTISM OF OUR LORD.

When our Blessed Lord was baptised in the river Jordan by St. John, it pleased Almighty God to show more clearly to the world the sublime mystery of the Blessed Trinity, which until that time had been but partly revealed to mankind. St. Matthew relates the history of this event in the following words :—

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized by him. But John stayed Him, saying, *I ought to be baptised by Thee, and comest Thou to me?* And Jesus answering, said, *Suffer it to be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice.* Then he suffered Him.

“And Jesus, being baptised, forthwith came out of the water. And lo! the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*”—*Matt. iii.*

See here, my dear children, the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, clearly revealed to mankind; the voice of the Heavenly Father, the Holy Ghost descending in the form of a dove, and God the Son receiving the baptism of his servant St. John.

## ST. PATRICK AND THE SHAMROCK.

The great St. Patrick, who was sent by the Pope, 400 years after our Blessed Lord, to preach the gospel to the Irish, found them a prey to gross superstition and idolatry. In the course of his apostolic journeys, he arrived at the hill of Tara on Easter Eve, the very day on which the false priests of the country, called Druids, were performing on that sacred spot the ceremonies of their false god Baal, in presence of King Leogaire and all his court. According to the ancient law of the country, no fire could be lighted on that day before the sacred fire of Baal had been kindled; and the Druids had warned the King that, if this were done, the person who lighted the unlawful flame would subdue the land, and change the customs and religion of the people. St. Patrick, however, in performing the solemn office of the Church, blessed the sacred fire, as is usual on Easter Eve, and lighted the Paschal candle. The Druids, observing the strange light, came to the King in the greatest consternation,

and begged that he would immediately order it to be extinguished. Thereupon the King, summoning his armed horsemen, rode in anger to the spot, but was met by St. Patrick and his attendants, who came forth in procession, singing the praises of God. The King, touched by God's grace, received him with courtesy, and granted him an audience, which took place on the following morning. At this conference, which was attended by all the chieftains and Druids of the neighbourhood, St. Patrick delivered a full explanation of Catholic doctrine, which was followed by the conversion of many of his hearers, and soon after by that of the whole island.

It was on this occasion that St. Patrick, while instructing the people in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, gathered from the ground a sprig of shamrock, to explain to them more clearly the doctrine of Three Persons in One God. "Behold," he would say to them, "this little plant, which bears on the one stalk three small leaves, the exact copy and resemblance of one another. They are distinct and separate, yet they are one, for they form but one sprig, and rest upon one stalk. So is it, my brethren, that I preach to you a God one in nature and three in person, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, each equally God, but possessing one undivided Godhead."

Since that time, the faithful people of Ireland have loved and cherished this little plant, which their great apostle made use of in the conversion of their forefathers. They have never ceased to glory in it, as the fittest emblem of their country and their faith.—*Life of St. Patrick.*

Q. What is this mystery called?

A. It is called the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

This Divine truth, namely, that there are three Persons in one God, is called the *mystery of the Blessed Trinity*. For the word *mystery* means a truth which we are not able to understand, and the word *Trinity* means three Persons in one God. Now, we are not able to understand how there can be three distinct and separate Persons in One Undivided Godhead; therefore we speak of the Blessed Trinity as a mystery, a great and sublime mystery. There are many other mysteries in religion besides the Blessed

Trinity, for Almighty God, to try our obedience, proposes many things to our belief which are far beyond our weak, limited understandings, but which the virtue of faith teaches us to receive at once without doubting, because they are revealed to us by God Himself. For example, it is a mystery to us how God created the world in a moment out of nothing, and how God is present in every portion of space, whole and entire. In regard to these things, we are like little children, who cannot understand many things that grown-up people can; for example, how a watch can be made to tell the time, or what causes the thunder to roll, or the lightning to flash. In the same manner, grown-up people cannot understand many things which the Angels can, for *their* knowledge and understanding are far greater than ours, so that there are many things that are mysteries to us, which are not mysteries to the Angels. And those things which are, so to speak, mysteries to the Angels because they have not been revealed to them, are not mysteries to God, for He sees and knows all things. You see, then, that mysteries come only from the fact of our understandings being limited and imperfect. When we go to heaven, those things which are mysteries to us now will be no longer mysteries, for our souls will then be enlightened, and we shall see them in the light of God's presence. Hence, St. Paul says, "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face." \*

I will now say another word about the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. We call the Holy Trinity *Blessed*, because it is of God, who is worthy to be blest for ever, that we speak; and, in the same manner, we sometimes say the *Adorable* Trinity, because the One God in three Persons is worthy of

all our adoration. We also sometimes say the *Undivided Trinity*, because God is not and cannot be divided, though he exists in three distinct Persons. This mystery, my dear children, is the foundation of all religion, and those who do not believe in it, as the Socinians and Unitarians, are not Christians at all. Hence, before we were christened, we were asked by the priest whether we believed in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost; and our godfathers and godmothers, speaking for us, answered, that we did believe. We were then baptized in the name of the most Holy Trinity.

As we owe everything, both in soul and body, to the three Persons of the Adorable Trinity, we ought exceedingly to love and reverence this blessed Mystery. Morning and night should we bow down to adore, praise, and thank the One God in three Divine Persons; and all that we do, we should perform in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We might also, to honour the Blessed Trinity, sometimes recite, with all the affection of our hearts, this little prayer:

“Blessed be the Holy and Undivided Trinity now and for evermore. Amen.”

Q. Is there any kind of likeness of the Blessed Trinity in your soul?

Yes; for as in one God there are three Persons, so in my one soul there are three powers.

Q. Which are these three powers?

A. My understanding, my memory, and my will.

Our souls, my dear children, which are made to the image and likeness of God, have also a certain likeness or resemblance to the Blessed Trinity. This likeness, however, is by no means a perfect one, for there can be no perfect likeness to that which is a sublime mystery. In what, then, does this likeness consist? In this, that *as in one God there are three*

*Persons, so in the one soul of man there are three powers.* The next answer tells you what these powers are; they are the *understanding*, the *memory*, and the *will*. The understanding is that power of the soul which enables us to think, to reason, to learn, and to know. The memory makes us able to call to mind what we have before learned; and the will gives us the power of choosing what we will do, for example, whether we will sit or stand, speak or be silent, &c. Thus, when a boy learns easily and well what is taught him, we say that he has a clever understanding; when he easily forgets what he has learnt, we say that he has a bad memory; and when he is always bent on evil, choosing it rather than good, we say that he has a perverse will. Now these three powers, as you well know, belong to the soul, for it is not the body that thinks, remembers, or chooses. In this much, then, is the soul like to the Blessed Trinity, that, while the soul is one and cannot be divided, it possesses three distinct powers, as God, who is one, exists in three distinct Persons. But it falls short of being like the Blessed Trinity in this, that each of the Persons in God is God, whole and entire; but each of the powers of the soul is not the soul itself, but only a power or faculty which the soul possesses.

#### ST. AUGUSTINE'S VISION.

It is related by St. Augustine that, while busied in writing his discourse upon the Trinity, he wandered on the sea shore, lost in meditation. While thus occupied in pondering on this sublime mystery, he beheld a child, who, having dug a hole in the sand, appeared to be bringing water from the sea to fill it. St. Augustine inquired what he was trying to do. "I am trying," he replied, "to empty into this hole all the waters of the deep." "What you are trying to do is impossible," said St. Augustine. "Not more impossible," replied the child, "than for thee, O Augustine, to explain the mystery on which thou art meditating."—*St. Augustine.*

## SIXTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Second Article. Jesus Christ. His Divinity and Sacred Humanity.*

Q. What is the second article of the Creed ?

A. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

We come now to the second article of the Creed, in which we express our faith in God the Son, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In this article we declare that we believe him to be truly the Son of God, made man to redeem us, and in the five following articles we make an act of faith in the different truths that we are taught concerning him. It is particularly necessary that we should be well instructed in all that relates to God the Son, because He is our Saviour, and it is through His merits only that we can obtain the pardon of our sins and enter into heaven.

But why is it that Jesus Christ is in this article particularly called *our Lord*, that is to say, our Sovereign Master ? Is not God the Father our Lord also ; and is not the Holy Ghost, who is equal in everything to the Father and the Son, Lord and Master of all, as well as they ? Most certainly, my dear children ; but there is a particular reason why we give this title especially to God the Son. It is because He is our Lord not only as God, but also as *man*. For among all mankind who can be higher or more exalted than He ? And who can have a better title to be called our Lord than He, who has set us free from the slavery of the devil, given his

own life as the price of our ransom, and come expressly from heaven to establish in our hearts the kingdom of his love? Wherefore the Heavenly Father says to his Divine Son, as man, in one of the Psalms, "I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." \* And the Archangel St. Gabriel, in announcing to the Blessed Virgin the birth of her Divine Son, said, "The Lord God shall give to him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." † Hence, in order to show that we acknowledge him to be our king, and wish to honour and obey him as such, we usually call him our "Blessed Lord," or our "Lord Jesus Christ."

Q. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. He is God the Son, made man for us.

Yes; He is God the Son, made man for us. For Jesus Christ is the Holy and Adorable Name which the Son of God took, when he became man, in order to redeem us. Therefore, when we speak of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity simply *as God*, we generally call him God the Son, but when we speak of him *as God made man for us*, that is, as both God and man, we call him Jesus Christ. The meaning of this Holy Name is explained in the catechism at the end of this article.

You will notice that the greater part of our prayers to God which come in the prayer book, are addressed to Jesus Christ. There are some to God the Father, some to God the Holy Ghost, and some to the Blessed Trinity; but most of them are to Jesus Christ. What is the reason of this? It is because it is in Him, as our Saviour, that we place all our hopes. His becoming man and dying for us

\* Ps. ii. 8.

† Luke, i, 32, 33.

on the cross fills us with a tender confidence, and makes us no longer afraid to approach him. The sinner, when he thinks of his own wickedness and of the Holiness and Majesty of God, might tremble and be afraid to draw near to a God whom he has so much offended; but when he looks at Jesus Christ, who, though God, became man and died for sinners, he is no longer afraid, but runs to Him with confidence and begs him to wash out his sins in His Precious Blood. For the same reason, when we pray to God the Father, we always end our prayers with these words, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, because our prayers can only please the Heavenly Father, when offered up through the merits of his Divine Son.

Q. Is Jesus Christ truly God?

A. Yes; He is truly God.

Q. Why is Jesus Christ truly God?

A. Because He has one and the same nature with God the Father.

Jesus Christ *is truly God*, my dear children, and why? *Because he has one and the same nature with God the Father*, that is to say, because he has the nature of God; just as the Angels are Angels because they have the nature of Angels, and man is man because he has a body and soul, which is the nature of man. But what do we mean when we say that Jesus Christ has *the nature of God*? What does the nature of God consist in? You have already been told in the explanation of the first article of the Creed, where you learnt that "God is the Supreme Spirit, who alone exists of himself, and is infinite in all perfections." You see from this, that the nature of God is to be the highest or greatest of all spirits, to exist of his own Power, and to possess every perfection in an infinite or boundless degree. This, then, is the nature which Jesus Christ possesses as

the only begotten Son of the Eternal Father.

It follows from what I have said, that Jesus Christ is infinitely worthy of our homage and adoration. While, therefore, we honour and love him as our Lord and our Saviour, we also adore him as our God. In all our wants, trials, and dangers, we look up to him with an entire confidence, knowing that He, who became man and died to save us, is a God of Infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness, and therefore both able and willing to assist, console, and defend us.

#### DEATH OF ARIUS.

The frightful death of the impious heretic Arius is a terrible example of the just anger of God against the teachers of false doctrine, and especially against those who dare to blaspheme the name of his Divine Son. This wicked man, who lived about three hundred years after the time of our Blessed Lord, had blasphemously asserted that Jesus Christ, though the Son of God, is of a different substance, and inferior to his Heavenly Father. This false doctrine was solemnly condemned by the great Council of Nicæa, composed of Bishops from all parts of the world, with the legates or representatives of the Pope at their head. Arius, however, still found many followers, and succeeded in obtaining the support of the Roman Emperor Constantine, who ordered the Bishop of Constantinople to receive Arius back to the communion of the Church. The holy Bishop had recourse to God by prayer, to avert so great a scandal, and Almighty God, jealous of the honour of his Divine Son, did not fail to hear him. On the day appointed for the forcible reception of Arius into the church, a procession of his followers was formed in the streets of Constantinople. With songs of triumph and with great parade, they led forth Arius to the church, boasting loudly of the victory which they had obtained over the Catholic Bishops. Their triumph, however, was but of short duration, for as they were passing through the great square of the city, the anger of God overtook the unhappy man. Suddenly he was seized with frightful spasms, which compelled him to take refuge in a secret room until he should be able to resume his journey. Hour after hour passed away, and he did not make his appearance.

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The people grew impatient, and his followers were alarmed at the delay. At length they ventured to enter the closet to which he had retired. There he lay stretched on the ground, a frightful spectacle; his face pale and livid, his body stiff in death, and the whole floor strewed with his blood and intestines. His body had burst asunder, like that of the traitor Judas.—*Theodoret.*

Q. Was Jesus Christ always God ?

A. Yes, He was always God; born of the Father from all eternity.

As Jesus Christ is truly God, possessing the nature and perfections of God, it follows as a matter of course, that *he was always God*, since God has no beginning, and, therefore, as he is God now, there never could have been a time when he was not God. How is it then, my dear children, that he is called the *Son* of God? Is not the son younger than the father, and does not the father always exist before the son? On earth it is so: but we must not pretend to compare earthly things with heavenly ones. Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, *born of the Father*, but by a wonderful and mysterious birth, which began *from all eternity*, and is continually going on, so that there never was a time when God the Son did not exist along with God the Father. This mysterious birth or generation, as it is called, of God the Son, is therefore a very different thing from human birth. It is a mystery, taught us by God himself, and which, accordingly, we believe and adore, though human reason cannot fathom it. By this eternal birth God the Son possesses all the perfections of his Heavenly Father, since he possesses the same Divine nature, being one and the same God with Him.

Q. Which Person of the Blessed Trinity is Jesus Christ?

A. He is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

This answer of the catechism follows as a matter of course from those which have gone before. Jesus

Christ is God the Son, made man for us, and therefore *he is the Second*, and not the first or third *Person of the Blessed Trinity*. But though it was the second Person alone who took a human body to redeem us, do not think that what God the Son did, he did separately or apart from the Father and the Holy Ghost. No, all the three Persons concurred in the work of redeeming man, as they did also in that of creating him ; for these three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are One, and do not act separately or apart from one another. Thus God the Father gave his only Son for our Redemption, and it was, as you will see in the next article, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost that this great and wonderful mystery was accomplished.

Q. Is Jesus Christ truly man ?

A. Yes ; He is truly man.

Q. Why is He truly man ?

A. Because He has the nature of man, having a body and soul like ours.

You have seen already that Jesus Christ is truly God, because he has the nature of God. But he is also *truly man*. And why ? Your catechism tells you, *because he has the nature of man*, and it goes on to explain what that nature consists of, when it says, *having a body and soul like ours*. This, then, is the nature of man, this is what makes man what he is, to have a human body and a soul made to the image of God. In the same manner it is the nature of the Angels to be spirits without bodies, and of the lower animals to have a body, endowed with life indeed, but without a human and immortal soul. Now the Son of God, in coming to save man, did not take the form and nature of an Angel, much less that of any of the lower orders of his creatures, but he took the nature of *man*, that is to say, a body descended from Adam, and a soul created to the image of God. In

a word, he became one of us, in all excepting sin. By thus becoming truly man, he has bestowed the highest honour upon our human nature, making us thereby his brethren, and raising us to the exalted dignity of sons of God.

Q. Was Jesus Christ always man?

A. No. He has been man only from the time of His incarnation.

Jesus Christ has been always God, for he was born of the Father from all eternity, but he has not been always man, but *only from the time of his Incarnation*, when he became man in order to save us. There has been a time, therefore, when Jesus Christ was not man, but there has never been a time when he was not God. Six thousand years ago, when the world was made, he was God, as he had ever been, but he was not yet man. Adam sinned, lost the favour of God, was driven out of paradise, and condemned to hell; all this time Jesus Christ was God only, surrounded by thousands of adoring Angels, and enjoying the infinite glory and happiness of heaven. But then it was, that, touched with the misery of man, and pitying his sad lot, He offered himself to his Heavenly Father to become man, and bear man's punishment by dying for him on the cross, in order that His Father might pardon sinful man, and open to him again the gate of heaven. God the Father accepted the generous sacrifice. He consented that his Son should die and man be saved, but not as yet; the world must first be prepared for this great event. He therefore only promised to Adam that the day should come, when the woman should crush the serpent's head, that is to say, that his Divine Son should one day be born of a woman, and destroy the power of the devil, who in the form of a serpent had tempted Eve.

Adam and Eve lived on, believing and hoping in *the promise of God*, but the Son of God did not come in their lifetime. Two thousand years passed away, the world became steeped in sin through the wickedness of man, and was swept by God with the terrible waters of the deluge; but Jesus Christ did not yet come. The world must first be made to feel the want of a Saviour, and be prepared to know and receive him when he came. Then Almighty God sent into the world good and holy men, who might show forth in their own lives all that was to happen to Jesus Christ, and thus prepare mankind to receive him. Thus Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Melchisedech, and others, whom we call the Patriarchs, and of whom you will read in the History of the Bible, were so many *types* or figures of our Blessed Saviour, who fulfilled in his Life, Passion and Death, what happened to *them* thousands of years before.

After this, Almighty God, seeing mankind again deeply plunged in sin and following for the most part the worship of false gods and idols, chose out one people or nation to preserve the knowledge of the true God, and the promise of a Saviour, which he had made first to Adam and Eve, and afterwards to the holy Patriarchs. This people was called the Jewish people, and was descended from Abraham. It was divided into twelve tribes, who were descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, Abraham's grandson. This people at first endured great sufferings from the tyranny of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, but Almighty God brought them out of Egypt, under the command of Moses, to whom he gave power to work many wonderful miracles to effect their deliverance. After this he led them into the desert, and opened for them a passage through the waters of the Red Sea, into the beautiful land which he gave them to dwell in. But before he gave them possession of this land, he

first taught them his Divine Law in the desert, in which they were condemned to wander for forty years on account of their sins. This law of God, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and through him to the Jews or Israelites, contains the ten commandments, and the manner in which the Jews had to serve and worship Almighty God. It is called *the Written Law*, because it was written down by God's command. Until then, the messages of God to man had never been written, but had been handed down by word of mouth from father to son. This is what we call Tradition, or the Unwritten Law, and it was by this that man was taught the will of God until the time of Moses. About this time Almighty God showed the Jews many things, in *signs and figures*, about his Divine Son, all of which were carefully written down by God's command in that sacred book, which is called the Bible, and which is the word of God himself.

Hundreds of years now passed away, and the Son of God was not yet born on earth. The Jews, the favoured people of God, in their new country, often forgot the God who had given it them, and fell away into the worship of false gods, like the nations around them. They were then brought back to their duty, sometimes by severe punishments, which God sent them, and at other times by the preaching of certain holy men, who came as messengers from God to warn them of his anger. These holy men, who were called *Prophets*, were full of the Spirit of God, and were inspired by Him to make known to the Jews many more particulars about his Divine Son, that no one might possibly mistake him, when he should appear. Thus David, Isaiah, Jeremias, Daniel, and the other prophets, pointed out the place and time of his Birth, the family and the Virgin Mother, of whom he should be born, and the different events of his Life, Passion

and Death. At length no more prophets appeared; the time was now drawing near for the Birth of the Son of God.

Meanwhile, the Jewish people were led captives into a strange land, both in punishment of their repeated disobedience, and that the knowledge of God's promises of a Saviour might be more widely spread; but, when the Jews were humbled and repentant, God brought them back from thence, that the prophecies might be fulfilled regarding the Birth and Death of his Divine Son. All the great events which took place in the world about this time were also made to serve to the accomplishment of this sublime mystery,—the coming of the Son of God to save mankind. *Empire succeeded empire*, each doing its appointed task, until at last the whole world was united in one vast empire, that of Rome, ready for the coming of the Saviour and the preaching of the gospel. Then, and not till then, four thousand years after the promise made to Adam, was the great mystery accomplished; the Son of God took our human nature, and was born into the world to suffer and die for man.

#### THE VISION OF NABUCHODONOSOR.

Many hundred years before the coming of our Blessed Lord, Almighty God showed to Nabuchodonosor, King of Babylon, in a dream, how his own empire, and the empires which succeeded it, should go before and prepare the way for the establishment of that spiritual kingdom which his Divine Son was coming to found upon earth. Nabuchodonosor woke in the morning much terrified, and yet he could not recall to mind the dream which had filled him with alarm. He accordingly summoned all the wise men of his kingdom, and bade them, under pain of death, declare to him both the dream, which he had forgotten, and the interpretation or meaning of it. As they were unable to do so, he ordered them to be led to execution.

Hereupon, the prophet Daniel, inspired by Almighty God, went to the King, and, begging him to stay the execution,

declared himself ready to relate to him both the dream itself and its mysterious meaning.

"Thou, O King," said he, "didst begin to think, in thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter, and He that revealeth mysteries showed thee what shall come to pass.

"Thou sawest, and behold ! there was, as it were, a great statue. The head of this statue was of fine gold, but the breast and the arms of silver, and the belly and the thighs of brass, and the legs of iron, the feet, part of iron and part of clay. Thus thou sawest, till a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands, and it struck the statue upon the feet thereof, and broke them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and they were carried away by the wind, and there was no place found for them; but the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 'This is the dream: we will also tell the interpretation thereof.

"Thou art a king of kings, and the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and strength, and power, and glory. Thou, therefore, art the head of gold. And after thee shall rise up another kingdom, inferior to thee, of silver, and another third kingdom of brass. And the fourth kingdom shall be as iron. As iron breaketh into pieces and subdueth all things, so shall that break and destroy all these. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. In the days of those kingdoms the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and it shall break in pieces, and shall consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand for ever. As thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and broke in pieces the clay, and the iron, and the brass, and the silver, and the gold."—*Daniel*, ii.

These four kingdoms, my dear children, are the four great empires which preceded the coming of Christ, and each of which performed the part marked out for it by Providence, in preparing the way before him. The great Babylonian Empire chastised the Jews for their idolatry, by leading them into the seventy years' captivity; the Persian Empire brought them back, humbled and penitent, into the land where the Son of God was to be born. The Grecian Empire spread the Holy Scriptures throughout the world,

that all mankind might be ready to receive and know where to look for their Redeemer. Finally the Roman Empire, by uniting the world into one vast nation, made the preaching of the gospel easy, at the same time that it fulfilled the prophecies which pointed out the place and time of our Saviour's Birth, and the circumstances of his cruel Passion and Death. But all this was but to prepare the way for the establishment of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, shown to the king of Babylon under the figure of a stone, cut from a mountain, but not by human hands, and filling the whole earth. Of this kingdom there shall be no end, for the Church of Christ, built on a rock, shall stand unshaken till the end of time, and shall continue to exist for all eternity in heaven.

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## SEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Second Article—Continued. Jesus Christ. His Incarnation and Office of Redeemer. His Holy Name.*

Q. What do you mean by His incarnation ?

A. I mean His taking to Himself our human nature.

In the last lesson of the catechism, my dear children, you learnt that our Blessed Lord, though he has been always God, has not been always man, but only from the time of his Incarnation, that is, of his becoming man to redeem us. We now come to speak of his Incarnation, which is one of the most important doctrines of our holy religion. It is the third of those four great truths which I have spoken to you about on the two last Sundays, and which are some-

times called the *necessary truths*, because it is probable that no one can be saved unless he both knows and believes them. The first of these truths is *the Existence of One God*, the second, *the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity*, and the third is that great mystery of Love, of which we are now going to speak, namely, *the Incarnation of the Son of God*.

The appointed time had now arrived when the promise of a Redeemer, made to our first parents after their fall and repeated at different times to the Holy Patriarchs and Prophets, was at length to be fulfilled; and, all things having been prepared for this great event, the Archangel St. Gabriel was sent from heaven to a humble maiden named Mary, of the tribe of Juda and family of David, to announce to her that she was chosen among all women to be the Mother of God made man. Mary having with deep humility accepted the sublime office, the Son of God, by a wonderful miracle, took flesh, that is to say, a human body, in her virginal womb, while his Heavenly Father, at the same moment, created an immortal soul, adorned with every grace, which our Blessed Lord took and made his own. Thus was the Son of God made man, or, in other words, *took to himself our human nature*, which, as the catechism says, is what we mean by the mystery of the Incarnation. It is from this great event, the greatest that has ever happened, that we now count or reckon time; so that when we speak of this being the year 1865, we mean that it is 1865 years since the Son of God became man to redeem us.

Now, I have a question to ask you; let me see if you can answer it. Jesus Christ has not been always man; but can you tell me is he man now, and, if so, will he always continue to be man? Most certainly; for though our Lord died on the cross, he raised his Blessed Body to life again on the

third day, and forty days after ascended into heaven, where he sits, and will for ever sit, at the right hand of his Heavenly Father. Jesus Christ is therefore ever present in heaven *as man*, seated in the midst of power and majesty; but is he present anywhere else, I mean with his human body and his human soul, for, as God, of course he is present everywhere? Yes, he is present *as man* in the Blessed Sacrament, concealed under the humble appearance of bread and wine. And where is the Blessed Sacrament? It is, you know, kept in the church upon the altar, shut up in what is called the tabernacle. There our Blessed Lord awaits us, inviting us to come and adore him, and ask him for whatever we stand in need of. And this it is which makes a Catholic church or chapel, however poor and humble, so holy and sacred, since it is the dwelling-place of Jesus Christ. Hence you are taught, whenever you enter the church, always to kneel and adore our Blessed Lord, and to behave with the greatest reverence while you remain, since you are in the immediate presence of the Son of God.

We should never forget, my dear children, often to thank our Blessed Lord for his Infinite Goodness in becoming man to save us. It is for this purpose that we recite the Angelus morning, noon, and night; for the Angelus is, as it were, a little history of our Lord's Incarnation. In Catholic countries the church bell is always rung at the time of the Angelus, and all good Catholics, wherever they may be, in their houses, in the streets, or in the market places, immediately uncover themselves and say it. Often they go and kneel down before some way-side cross or image of our Blessed Lady, in order to recite it more devoutly. Let *us* also be faithful to this pious practice which is so Catholic, and to which many

indulgences are attached by the Pope. Morning, noon, and night, let us join with the whole Church of God throughout the world in thanking our dear Lord by this devotion for his Infinite Goodness in becoming man to save us, and in honouring that Blessed Mother from whom he took our human nature.

#### THE DEVIL AND THE YOUNG MAN.

In assisting at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we are taught to bend our knee twice in honour of our Lord's Incarnation; first during the Creed, at the words, "Et Homo factus est, *and he was made man*;" and, secondly, at the "Verbum caro factum est, *the Word was made flesh*," which comes in the last gospel just before the end of Mass. It is related by a certain ancient writer, that it happened on one occasion that a young man, who was present at Mass, neglected to genuflect at the words, "And he was made man," in the Creed, whereupon the devil appeared to him in a terrible form, armed with a club, and thus addressed him, "Ungrateful wretch, dost thou not thank the God who was made man for thee? If he had done for us what he has done for thee, we should be ever prostrate before him, thanking and adoring him. And thou dost not even make a sign of thankfulness." So saying, he struck him rudely with his club and left him, like Heliodorus of old, half dead with pain and fear.—*St. Ligouri on the Commandments.*

Q. How many natures, then, are there in Jesus Christ?

A. There are two; the nature of God and the nature of man.

You see, then, my dear children, from what has been said, that Jesus Christ possesses two distinct natures, the nature of God and the nature of man; or, in other words, the Divine and the human natures. The one he possesses as the Son of God, the other as the Son of Mary. But both he possesses whole and entire. By his Divine nature he has every perfection; he is Eternal, Almighty, infinitely Powerful, infinitely Wise, &c.; by his human nature he possesses a human body, and a soul endowed with

reason and free will, both most perfect indeed, but like the body and soul of man. These two natures are intimately united in Jesus Christ, but they are not mixed or confounded. In his human nature, when on earth, he toiled for the salvation of man, prayed, suffered and died. By the infinite Power of his Divine nature he healed the sick, raised the dead to life, rose again from the grave, and ascended into heaven. These two natures are expressed in the one word, "Man-God," which is often used in speaking of our Blessed Lord, as when we say, "it required the sufferings of a Man-God to redeem us," that is of one who possessed the double nature of man and God.

#### THE EUTYCHIAN CONFOUNDED.

A certain follower of the sect of the Eutychians, who deny that there are two natures in Jesus Christ, was one day trying to convince a Catholic boy that our Blessed Lord, after his Incarnation, had only one nature, as he has only one Person. To prove this the more clearly, he placed two pieces of iron in the fire, and, when they were melted, joined them together, so as to make but one. "Behold," said he, "the manner in which God and man join to make the one nature of Jesus Christ." "But, master," said the boy, "what if one of the pieces be of gold instead of iron? Will they not then make a single piece consisting of two metals? So is it that the Son of God, in taking a body and soul like ours, has united the two natures of God and man in a single Person."—*Anecdotes Chrétiennes.*

Q. Are there two Persons also in Jesus Christ?

A. No, in Jesus Christ there is only one Person, which is the Person of God the Son.

While we believe that there are two natures in Jesus Christ, the nature of God and the nature of man, we must always remember that *there is only one Person*. That Person is *the Person of God the Son*. He *was* God, and he became man without ceasing to

be God, and thus united in his one Person the Divine and human natures. Attend carefully to the explanation which I am about to give you of this most important truth. Though we cannot fully explain that which is a mystery, yet it will help you to understand better the meaning of what the catechism says, namely, that there are *two* natures in Jesus Christ, but only *one* Person.

Look at yourselves. You are made up of soul and of body ; is it not so ? But though you have, each of you, a soul and a body, yet you are only one person. Your body is not a person by itself, neither is your soul. *You* are the person, *you*, who possess this body and this soul. You make use at one time of the body, and at another time of the soul, just according to your need. You think with your understanding, which is one of the powers of the soul ; you see with your eyes, which are one of the senses of the body. You love God with your will, which belongs to the soul ; you sing his praises with your lips and your tongue, which are members of the body. But *you* are the person who thinks, sees, praises, and loves God,—*you*, John, Mary, or Thomas, to whom God has given a human nature, consisting of soul and of body ; *you* are the person who does all, whichever part of your human nature you make use of.

Behold, my dear children, a faint image of what takes place in Jesus Christ, and of what we mean when we say that there are two natures in Jesus Christ, but only one Person. It is He, the Son of God, who is the Person, and who did everything that we read of in the history of his life upon earth, but sometimes he employed his Divine and sometimes his human nature to accomplish his designs. He suffered hunger, thirst, and cold, *as man*, but he fed the famishing multitudes in the wilderness by his Almighty Power *as God* ; he prayed to his Father as

man, but, *as God*, he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm; he died on the cross *in his human nature*, but *by his own Divine and Almighty Power* he raised his Blessed Body to life, and ascended to the right hand of his Heavenly Father. But whether he fasted or fed the hungry, prayed or worked miracles, suffered or triumphed, it was the one Person of Jesus Christ who accomplished all, though at one time he acted by his *human* and at another by his *Divine* nature. The knowledge of this truth will help you to understand the great mystery of our Redemption, which we come to speak of in the next answer of the catechism.

Q. Why was God the Son made man?

A. To redeem us from sin and hell.

Yes, it was *to redeem us from sin and hell*, that is to say, to atone for our sins; and to save us from the punishment of hell, which we had deserved by them, that the Son of God took our human nature. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, were created by God, they were created free from sin; their souls were perfectly pure and spotless, and enjoyed the particular favour and friendship of God. Their bodies also were endowed with a health and vigour which would never have failed them, had they remained faithful and obedient to their Creator. Almighty God, having created them, placed them in the beautiful garden of Paradise, which he destined to be their happy abode until the appointed time came, when he purposed to transfer them without dying from earth to heaven. Before putting them, however, in possession of this eternal reward, the Justice of God required that he should first try them, in order to test their obedience and fidelity to him. He accordingly laid upon them one command, which was, that they should not eat of the fruit of one of the trees

which grew in the garden of Paradise, and which was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. At the same time, he threatened them with the severest punishments in case of their disobedience. "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it," said he, "thou shalt die the death."\* Tempted by the beautiful appearance of the fruit and deceived by the artifices of the devil, Eve eat of the fruit, and gave it to Adam, who eat likewise, both thereby committing a grievous act of disobedience to God. Thus did sin first enter into the world, and the example of our first parents has unhappily been too closely followed by their descendants.

No sooner was the sin committed than the punishment followed. Almighty God, calling Adam and Eve before him, severely rebuked them, and declared that, in punishment of their sin, they had incurred the sentence with which he had threatened them, namely, *death*, that is to say, a double death—the death of the body and the eternal death of the soul. Now this punishment, my dear children, has come down from them to us; we are all born in the sin of our first parents, and we share also in the consequences of their guilt. Hence it is that our bodies, after a few short years, return to the dust out of which God made them; and our souls, though an infinitely Good and Just God would not condemn them to hell except in punishment of sins of our own, were, nevertheless, through the sin of our first parents, deprived at our very first coming into the world of the favor of God, and sentenced to be for ever excluded from the Divine presence, which would have been, as it were, a continual death. What, then, was to become of unhappy man, now that an Unchangeable God had pronounced this most just sentence? For who could offer to God an atonement

\* Gen. ii. 17.

sufficient to satisfy his Justice, and induce him to spare the guilty? No one, it would seem; to all appearance no one. For sin is an offence and outrage against an Infinite God, and requires therefore a satisfaction of infinite value, which no *man*, nor all men together, could make. The very Angels could not make a satisfaction of infinite value, for, though far above man, they are only creatures, and infinitely below God, so that *they* could not satisfy for sin or save mankind. And yet God, who always tempers Justice with Mercy, *did* promise Adam and Eve, when he passed sentence upon them, that he would send them a Saviour. *The woman*, he said, *shall crush the serpent's head,\** that is to say, one should be born of the woman, who should destroy the power of the devil. But who was this to be? No other than his own Divine Son, who, in his Infinite Goodness and Mercy, offered to become the victim to atone for the sins of man, and to bear in his own person the punishment that man had deserved. But behold the wonderful Mystery of the Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power of God! He wished to bear the punishment of sin; but, as God, he could not suffer. Besides, it was *man* that had sinned, and man that ought to atone. Therefore, without ceasing to be God, he became man, and united in his one Person the Divine and human natures. His human nature enabled him to suffer, and his Divine nature, being united with it in one Person, gave an infinite value to his sufferings. For it was, as we have seen, the Person of the Son of God who fasted, prayed, suffered, and died. Hence each action of Jesus Christ had so great a value in the sight of God, that a single prayer, a single drop of his Precious Blood, would have been sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world. But our dear Lord would suffer all he did

\* Gen. iii. 15.

suffer to show us the enormity of our sins and the greatness of his Love. See, then, my dear children, what claims he has to our eternal love and gratitude.

You will understand, from what I have said, that the word *to redeem*, as applied to Jesus Christ, means much the same as “to save;” wherefore we sometimes call him our Blessed Redeemer, and sometimes our Blessed Saviour. Strictly speaking, “to redeem” means *to buy back*; thus, in speaking of slaves or prisoners of war, we say, “it is a great charity to send money to redeem them,” that is, to buy back their liberty. Now *we* were slaves and prisoners of the devil by sin; and St. Peter says that Jesus Christ has redeemed us, not with gold or silver, or corruptible things, but with his own most Precious Blood,\* because he paid this price for the purchase of our liberty.

Q. What means the holy name Jesus?

A. Saviour.—*Matt.* i. 21.

The name Jesus, my dear children, is of all others the most holy and sacred, because it is the name which was borne by the Son of God when he lived upon earth. This holy name was given to our Blessed Lord not by man, but by God himself; for when the Angel appeared to St. Joseph to tell him not to fear to take our Blessed Lady for his spouse, for that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost, he expressly added, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.”† In the Hebrew language the name of Jesus has the meaning of *Saviour*; whence you see how particularly well suited it was to Him who was to be the Saviour of the whole world. Our Blessed Lord, however, was not the first who had borne this name, though He alone fully fulfilled the meaning of

\* I. Pet. i. 18.

† Matt. i. 21.

it. Others among the Jews, as we find from holy Scripture, had also been called Jesus, particularly Josue, the great captain who succeeded Moses and led the Israelites, amid many dangers, out of the desert into the promised land. Josue was in this a figure of our Blessed Lord, since he was in some manner the saviour of his people; whence he was fitly called Josuc, or Jesus, for these two names have one and the same meaning. But our Blessed Lord alone is our true Jesus, since He has died to save us all from sin and hell, and will lead us, if we walk in the way of his commandments, into the true land of promise, the kingdom of heaven.

As the name of Jesus is so sacred and holy, we should always pronounce it with profound respect, and bow our heads in reverence whenever we either utter or hear it. The Apostle St. Paul says that "in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." \* The very devils you see, are forced to show an outward respect when they listen to this Adorable Name. But if *they* bow through fear, we, like the Angels in heaven, will do it through love; for is it not the name of our King and our Saviour, of our best Friend and our loving and tender Father? Let the name of Jesus be often on your lips, uttered in some little fervent prayer to our dear Lord; but let it be always in your heart, tenderly loved and cherished, and moving you to many good works, for example, to many acts of patience, charity, and meekness. In your temptations, call on Jesus; His name will fill the devils with dismay and put them to flight. In all your wants, invoke Jesus; for what can He deny you, who has given himself to save you? In moments of weakness and of danger, utter this sweet name, and it will inspire you with fresh

\* Phil. ii. 10.

strength and courage ; in sickness and suffering it will bring you patience and resignation ; on the bed of death it will soothe your anguish and obtain for you a sure victory over the last efforts of the devil.

#### THE CURE OF THE LAME MAN.

Now Peter and John went up into the temple at the ninth hour of prayer. And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid every day at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, that he might ask alms of them that went into the temple.

He, when he had seen Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. But Peter with John fastening his eyes upon him, said, "Look upon us." But he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something of them. But Peter said, "Silver and gold I have none : but what I have I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk." And, taking him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles received strength. And, he, leaping up, stood, and walked, and went with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they knew him, that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple : and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him.

And as Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests and the officer of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them. And they laid hands upon them, and put them in hold till the next day. And it came to pass on the morrow, that, setting them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this ?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them, "Ye princes of the people and ancients, hear. If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to this infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole, be it known to you all, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him this man standeth before you whole. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved."—*Acts*, iii.

#### ST. TERESA AND THE DIVINE CHILD.

St. Teresa was so inflamed with love at the thought of our Blessed Lord's goodness in becoming man and dying

for her, that she looked upon this life as a continued martyrdom, through her ardent desire of being united to her Divine Spouse in heaven. It was her custom to sign all her letters, *Teresa of Jesus*, to show that she lived for Jesus alone, and loved him alone. One day, when she was walking through the cloisters of her convent at Avila, she met a beautiful child, who stopped when he saw her, and looked up to her face with an engaging smile. The holy nun, wondering how he had been able to enter the convent unknown to her, asked him to tell her his name. "I will, if you will tell me your own," said the child. "Mine," said St. Teresa, smiling, "I am called *Teresa of Jesus*." And if you would know mine," said the child, "I am called *Jesus of Teresa*." At the same moment he disappeared, leaving St. Teresa's heart overflowing with wonder and gratitude at the Infinite Goodness of our Blessed Lord, who returns so tenderly the love of his unworthy creatures.—*Anima Devota*.

Q. What means the name Christ?

A. Anointed.

The word Christ signifies *Anointed*, and was applied by the Jews at the time of our Blessed Lord to the Saviour or Redeemer whom they expected. Thus we find that, when St. John the Baptist had aroused public attention by the fame of his preaching, the Pharisees sent to ask him if he was *the Christ*.<sup>\*</sup> And they put the same question to our Blessed Lord. "How long," said they, "dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be *the Christ*, tell us plainly."<sup>†</sup> But you will ask why the name of *Christ* or *Anointed* was especially reserved for the expected Saviour.

It was, my dear children, on account of his three-fold character as Priest, Prophet, and King. For each of these was in the old law solemnly anointed with oil, to signify the graces which he required for the discharge of his important office. And even at the present time the anointing with oil forms part of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, by which priests are consecrated, and of the religious ceremony which accom-

<sup>\*</sup> John, i. 19, &c.

<sup>†</sup> John, x. 24.

panies the coronation of a king. Now, our Blessed Lord fulfilled all these three characters, wherefore he is justly styled, above all others, the *Christ* or *Anointed*. He is, as you know, our great High Priest, who offered on the cross, and still offers in the Mass, the sacrifice of his own Body for the salvation of the world. He is also the great Prophet who fulfilled the prophecies of all who had gone before, and predicted many things, some of which have already come to pass, and some of which remain to be accomplished at the end of the world. Finally, he is a King, for he came to establish in our hearts the kingdom of his grace, and to bring us all hereafter to the eternal kingdom of heaven. Do not imagine, however, that our Blessed Lord was anointed with oil, in the manner that man is anointed, to fulfil these sublime offices. No; His anointing was the presence of his Godhead or Divinity, closely united with his human nature. By this his Sacred Body and Soul were consecrated and set apart for the important office of redeeming man.

Before we go on to the next article, I am going to tell you a little history, which I want to know whether any of you have ever heard or read.

#### THE GENEROUS PRINCE.

A certain great monarch had a favourite nobleman, whom he had raised from an obscure condition, loaded with riches and honours, and placed in one of the highest offices of his kingdom. Unfortunately this favourite allowed the poison of pride to enter his heart. Puffed up with his good fortune, and not content to be second in the kingdom, he wished to be first. He accordingly planned a vast conspiracy, by which he might be able to put aside the king, and take possession of the throne. Fortunately, however, the plot was discovered at the moment fixed for its execution. The ungrateful nobleman was stripped of his riches and dignities, and banished with all his family to a remote province, where he was reduced to the same low and destitute state from which the king had first raised him.

Now it happened that the king had a son, a noble youth, full of tender compassion and generosity. Hearing of the disgrace of the former favourite, he hastened to his father, threw himself at his feet, and with many tears implored of him to pardon the exile and his family. The king graciously consented, and immediately the young prince, disguising himself, set off, alone and on foot, to bear to the wretched family the happy and unexpected tidings. After enduring the severest hardships and sufferings on the journey, the young prince at length arrived at the distant province to which they had been banished. He found the exile and his family plunged in the deepest misery, and suffering the extremity of want. The generous prince hastened to console them. "Rejoice," said he, "your sufferings are now at an end. I am the son of the king who sent you into banishment, and I have implored and obtained your pardon from my father. Henceforward consider me as your friend, as your brother. You shall return to court, you shall dwell in my palace, you shall sit at my own table; my riches, my honours, the kingdom which is my inheritance, all shall be yours."

At these words the unhappy exile and his family appeared in a moment restored to a new life. They raised their eyes to heaven, and blessed God for his wonderful goodness. Then, with bursting hearts and tears of gratitude, they cast themselves at the prince's feet, and strove to thank him for a generosity and self devotion which the world had never yet beheld. But all they could utter were these simple words :—"Prince, what are we, and what art thou!"—*Catéchisme de Persévérance.*

My dear children, have you ever heard before this touching history? Yes, for you yourselves belong to the family of the poor exile, who was your father, Adam. By his unhappy pride and desire to become like to God, he rebelled against his Divine Majesty, was driven out of Paradise, and condemned, with all his descendants, to wander an exile on earth, far from his true country, the kingdom of heaven. And who was the young prince? You know it was our dear Lord, the only Son of God, who, by his tears and prayers,—nay, even by his sufferings and cruel death, has satisfied for our sins and obtained our

pardon. He has laid aside, as it were, his glory and dignity, put on the disguise of our human flesh, and descended into the place of our banishment to bring us the happy tidings of our deliverance. And now he calls us his friends and his brothers, and promises to share with us the riches, the honours, the delights, of his heavenly kingdom. O Great Prince of Heaven, Eternal Son of God, what are we and what art Thou !

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## EIGHTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Third Article. Jesus Christ. His Conception and Birth.*

Q. What is the third article of the Creed ?

A. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

We have seen, my dear children, from the explanation of the second article of the Creed, who our Blessed Lord is, and how he became man in order to redeem us. We come now to the third article, in which we express our belief in his Conception and Birth ; “ Who was *conceived* by the Holy Ghost, *born* of the Virgin Mary.” The Incarnation of the Son of God, that is, his becoming man to save us, is indeed a wonderful Mystery of Divine Love ; but when we consider the manner in which this great event took place, we shall see still greater reason to admire the Infinite Goodness of our Blessed Lord, especially in his choosing, out of pure love to us, to be born in a stable, and to suffer, at his very entrance into the world, all the ills of poverty and want. As the meaning of this article is fully explained in the answer to the next question, I will now ask it you.

Q. What means this article ?

A. It means that God the Son took flesh and was made man by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, without having any man for His Father.

Attend, my dear children, to the words which you have just repeated, and you will learn from them three important truths.

*First.*—That *God the Son took flesh*, or in other words, that he *was made man*.

*Secondly.*—That he was born of *the Blessed Virgin Mary*.

*Thirdly.*—That this happened by a miracle, and *by the power of the Holy Ghost, without his having any man for His Father*.

*God the Son took flesh and was made man.* This great mystery, by which the Creator took the form of a creature, and the Lord of all the form of a slave, was accomplished on the 25th of March, which we commonly call the Feast of the Annunciation, or Lady Day, because on that day the message of the Angel was announced to our Blessed Lady. Mary was at that moment, as St. Bonaventure tells us, praying earnestly in the little cottage of Nazareth for the speedy redemption of mankind. She besought the Son of God to hasten the time of his coming, and prayed that she might be so far favoured as to be permitted to serve and wait upon the holy virgin who should be chosen for his Mother. While thus engaged in prayer, behold! a heavenly light shone in her little chamber, and Mary, raising her eyes, beheld, bowing before her and on bended knee, the great Archangel St. Gabriel. He spoke, and, in tones of deep reverence, greeted her with those words of salutation which you so often pronounce: “Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women.” At these

words Mary, as the holy Scripture says, "was troubled, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be." Her humility felt alarmed at hearing herself spoken of in such terms of praise, and that, too, by an Angel, one of the princes of the heavenly court. St. Gabriel, however, went on to encourage her, and to announce to her the important message of which he was the bearer. "Fear not, Mary, he said to her, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus." Mary listened to these happy tidings with mingled joy and gratitude, but one thing yet troubled her. She was a pure virgin. From her earliest infancy she had vowed her virginity to God, as the most precious offering she could make to him, and there was nothing which she prized more highly than the privilege of living and dying in this holy state. Yet the Angel had said that she was to become a mother. Wherefore Mary went on to ask him, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" And the Angel answering, said to her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." In other words the Angel promised that, by a great miracle of the Holy Ghost, Mary should become a mother, the Mother of the Son of God, and still remain a virgin. It is for this reason that the catechism says that "God the Son was made man *by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, without having any man for His Father.*"

The Blessed Virgin now knew that it was the will of Almighty God that she should be the Mother of his Divine Son made man; and so, with a heart full

of gratitude for this sublime honour, but still with deep humility, she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word." \* At that very moment, when she gave her consent, the great mystery was accomplished. "*God the Son took flesh and was made man in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary,*" thus uniting the two natures of God and Man in his one Person. And thus did Mary become the Mother of God, for she became the Mother of the Son of God made man.

But you will say, was not St. Joseph the father of Jesus Christ? No, my dear children, he was only his foster father. If one of you had lost your mother, when you were an infant, and some kind woman had fed you, and nursed you, and brought you up, till you were as old as you are now, what would she be to you? Your mother? No, but your foster mother. Yet you would love her very much, and almost look on her as a mother. And so did Jesus Christ love, and esteem, and honour St. Joseph, who guarded him when a child; carried him into Egypt to save him from the bloody tyrant Herod; worked for his support at the trade of a carpenter; and was to him in all things like a tender and affectionate father. It is a good thing, therefore, to pray to St. Joseph, for our Blessed Lord will not refuse anything to him whom he so loved and honoured upon earth.

#### ST. TERESA ON DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH.

The holy virgin St. Teresa was distinguished for her particular devotion to St. Joseph. She celebrated his feasts with the greatest solemnity, thanked him often for the care which he took of our Blessed Lady and the Child Jesus, and recommended to him all her wants. Listen to what she says on the subject of devotion to this great Saint.

\* Luke, i.

"I took for my advocate and master the glorious St. Joseph, and I recommended myself much to him. I cannot remember having asked him for anything which he did not obtain. I am quite amazed when I consider the great favours our Lord has shown me through the intercession of this blessed Saint, and the many dangers, both of soul and body, from which he has delivered me. It seems that to other saints our Lord has given power to succour us in only one kind of necessity; but this glorious Saint, I know by my own experience, assists us in all kinds of necessities. Hence our Lord, it appears, wishes us to understand that, as He was obedient to him when on earth, for he was called His father, so now in heaven He grants him whatever he asks. Would that I could persuade all men to be devout to this glorious Saint. I have never known anyone who was truly devoted to him, and who performed particular devotions in his honour, that did not advance more in virtue, for he assists in a special manner those souls who recommend themselves to him."—*Life of St. Teresa.*

Q. Where was our Saviour born?

A. In a stable at Bethlehem.

The Son of God having become man, chose, of all other places, a poor miserable stable for the place of his birth. If he had wished it, he might have been born in a palace, laid in a golden cradle, on the softest of beds, and in the midst of every comfort and luxury. You would think, perhaps, that a palace would have been a more proper place for the King of Heaven and earth to be born in. Why then did he choose to be born in a stable? To show us that the riches and comforts of this world are not what we are to seek after, but simply to do the Will of God. Besides, our Blessed Lord wanted to begin and suffer for our sins as soon as ever he came into the world; so he chose to be born in the midst of cold, poverty, and neglect. Having chosen *a stable* for the place of his birth, he wished furthermore to be born in *Bethlehem*, which city the prophet Micheas had long before pointed out as the birth-place of the Messiah or Redeemer.

Now the Birth of our Blessed Lord at Bethlehem was brought about by the Providence of God in this way. The Emperor of Rome, Cesar Augustus, who was at that time ruler of the Jews, wishing to know the number of his subjects, and to lay a tax on each, sent an order for all to go to the cities from which their families first came, to have their names entered upon the roll or register. The Blessed Virgin Mary, with her holy spouse St. Joseph, being of the family of David, had accordingly to go to Bethlehem, where Jesse, David's father, had lived, and where David was born. Bethlehem was a long way off their little home; for they lived at Nazareth, among the mountains of Galilee. Besides, it was the winter time; the roads were bad, and the weather bitterly cold; but for all that they did not delay, for they knew that it is God's will that we should obey the king. So they set out on their weary journey, and after travelling for three days amid the frost, and cold, and snow, arrived, towards the evening of the third day, at the city of Bethlehem. But alas! no one would take in the poor travellers, for the inns were full; and, besides, the hard-hearted people thought that, being poor, they might not be able to pay for their lodging. Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, therefore, turned back to a poor stable or cattle-shed, partly hollowed out of the rock, which they had seen when they entered the town, and there they went in to spend the night. Here it was, my dear children, that our Saviour, the Son of God, was born into the world at midnight, and his Blessed Mother Mary, after adoring him as her God, took him into her arms, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.\* It is said that there were an ox and an ass driven into the same stable by the cold winter's blast, and that

\* Luke, ii. 7.

they helped to warm the poor little Jesus with their hot breath. No doubt the Angels also were there in crowds to adore him, and some of them, as the Holy Scripture tells us, went to announce the birth of the Redeemer to the shepherds who were keeping the night-watch over their flocks. I will tell you the history of the shepherds' coming to adore our Blessed Lord, as we find it related in the gospel of St. Luke.

#### HISTORY OF THE SHEPHERDS.

And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold an Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of the Lord shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the Angel said to them, "Fear not; for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

And it came to pass, after the Angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us." And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. And, seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.—*Luke, ii.*

Q. Upon what day was He born ?

A. Upon Christmas-day.

Our Blessed Lord was born *upon Christmas-day*. This great day, as you know, comes in the very middle of winter, namely, on the 25th of December. It is sometimes called the Feast of the Nativity, because the Nativity or Birth of our Blessed Lord

took place on this day ; so it is in fact our Blessed Lord's birthday. Christmas-day is a day of great rejoicing both in heaven and on earth, since the coming of Jesus Christ into the world brought glory to God and hope and peace to man. Hence the Angels, when on this day they told the good tidings of our Blessed Lord's Birth to the shepherds, sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." \*

You will notice also that Christmas bears a good old Catholic name, for it means *the Mass of Christ*, that is to say, the Mass which is said in honour of his Birth. There are several other feasts which keep, even among Protestants, the old names which they had in those times when all were united in the one Catholic faith. These feasts bear witness that the Catholic religion is the old religion, and the religion of our forefathers. Thus we have Candlemas-day, that is, the day on which candles were blessed and carried at Mass (namely, on our Blessed Lady's Purification) ; Martinmas, on which day Mass was said in honour of St. Martin ; Michaelmas, or the Mass of St. Michael, &c. From these names, it is easy to see that in those days the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which Protestants have done away with, was offered up throughout the whole country.

#### THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

At the time when our Blessed Lord was born upon earth, other nations besides the Jews were in daily expectation of his coming. The traditions which had been handed down from father to son for many hundred years, and the prophecies which had become more generally known during the captivity of the Jews and under the Grecian Empire, all pointed out that the time was now at hand when the Saviour of all nations would appear in the land of the Jews. Hence it was, that about this time many were on the lookout for the appearance of the famous star predicted by the

\* Luke, ii, 14.

false prophet Balaam more than a thousand years before, which was considered to be a sure sign of the birth of the expected Messiah. The history of the appearance of this star to the three wise men, or, as they are often called, the three kings, is thus related in the Holy Scriptures.

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East and are come to adore him.'

"And King Herod, learning this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And, assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he enquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Juda, for so it is written by the prophet; *And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel.*' Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and, sending them into Bethlehem, said, 'Go and diligently enquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him.'

"Who, having heard the King, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary, his mother; and, falling down, they adored him. And, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And, having received an answer in sleep, that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country."—*Matt. ii.*

Thus, my dear children, did our Blessed Lord, at his first coming into the world, call the gentiles, that is to say, all other nations besides the Jews, in the persons of the three wise men, to adore him, to show that he came to open to all mankind the gates of heaven. In memory of this great event, the Church has instituted a solemn festival, which is called the Epiphany or *Appearance* of the star, and sometimes Twelfth Day, because it falls on the 6th of January, the twelfth day after Christmas.

## NINTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Fourth Article. Jesus Christ. His Passion and Death.*

Q. What is the fourth article of the Creed ?

A. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

The fourth article of the Creed, my dear children, is about the Sufferings, Death, and Burial of our Blessed Lord. The whole life of Jesus Christ, from his Birth in the stable to his last expiring sigh upon the cross, was indeed a life of suffering ; but this article relates to the cruel torments which he endured immediately before his Death, and which we commonly call his Sacred Passion. The Apostles' Creed says that he *suffered under Pontius Pilate*, because at that time Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judæa ; for the Jews were no longer a free people, but subject to the Romans, who had sent Pontius Pilate to rule over part of their country. It was to him that the Jews accused our Blessed Redeemer, for they had no power to put any one to death themselves. Pilate was a weak man, and, though he declared our Blessed Lord to be innocent of the charges brought against him, he nevertheless condemned him to the cruel death of the cross to please the Jews, and for fear of them making some complaint against him to the Roman Emperor ; for they said, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cesar's friend." \* Thus, a fatal human respect led him to commit a crying act of injustice, and to crucify the Son of God.

\* John, xix. 12.

Q. What were the chief sufferings of Christ?

A. His sweat of blood, His scourging at the pillar, His crowning with thorns, and the carrying of His cross.

In this answer are mentioned four of the principal sufferings of our Blessed Lord. You will notice that they are the same as the first four Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary; the fifth, the Crucifixion of our Lord, comes in the next answer. Thus the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary contain a short history of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The first great suffering which our Blessed Redeemer endured in his Passion, was his *Sweat of Blood*. This is sometimes called his Agony, or Prayer in the Garden. On the night before he was crucified, Jesus had gone to pray in the Garden of Olives, accompanied by his three Apostles, Peter, James, and John. Having left them at a little distance, he began his prayer, but became so overcome with the sight of our sins and ingratitude, and the natural fear of the torments he was about to endure, that he fell into a cruel agony of mind and body, and drops of blood came trickling down like sweat from every pore of his skin. It was on this occasion that he thrice repeated that beautiful prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. But yet, not my will, but thine be done." \* Then an Angel appeared from heaven to comfort him; and Jesus, knowing that it was his Father's Will that he should now enter upon his Passion, arose, and called his sleeping Apostles to come with him to meet the traitor Judas, who was at that moment entering the garden to apprehend him.

The second great suffering of our Blessed Lord, mentioned in the catechism, is his *Scourging at the pillar*. When our innocent Redeemer, after suffering the most barbarous treatment from the Jews

\* Matt. xxvi. 39; Luke, xxii. 42.

throughout the whole night, had been condemned to death by Pilate, He was given up by him into the hands of his soldiers to be scourged and afterwards crucified. These cruel men stripped our Blessed Lord of his clothes, then tied him to a pillar, and scourged him most barbarously with leathern thongs. The number of the stripes which they gave him was revealed to St. Bridget to have been above five thousand. The whole ground about was covered with blood, and our Blessed Lord would have expired under the cruel torture, had he not supported himself by a miracle for fresh sufferings.

The third suffering which is here mentioned, the *Crowning with thorns*, was inflicted on our Blessed Lord by the sheer cruelty of the soldiers; for he was not condemned to suffer this barbarous torture. The Holy Scripture informs us that, after he was scourged, "the soldiers plating a crown of thorns, put it upon his head, and put on him a purple garment. And they came to him and said, *Hail King of the Jews*, and they gave him blows." \* This torment was inflicted on our Lord in mockery of his kingly power, for the Jews had charged him with making himself king, and he himself had admitted to Pilate that he was a king, and that for this he came into the world, though he spoke of a spiritual, and not of an earthly kingdom. The pain and agony which our Lord suffered from this cruel crowning must have been intense, for the thorns of that country are long and sharp, and were on this occasion driven in by the blows of his persecutors. Pilate himself, when he beheld our dear Redeemer reduced to this pitiable state, was touched with compassion, and, hoping that the Jews, if they saw him, would be moved to some feelings of pity, brought him out to them with the crown of thorns on his head, the purple garment on his

\* John, xix. 2, 3.

shoulders, and the reed in his right hand, and introduced him to them, saying, "Behold the Man." But it was all in vain; the Jews only called the more loudly, "Crucify him, crucify him." \*

The *Carrying of the cross* was the next cruel torment that our Blessed Lord endured. Weak and fainting with hunger, thirst, and loss of blood, he had to carry to the hill of Calvary the heavy cross on which he was to be nailed. During this painful journey he fell several times; and, at length, his executioners were obliged to get one, Simon of Cyrene, whom they met coming into Jerusalem, to help Jesus to carry his cross. This, no doubt, is to teach us, my dear children, that if we wish to go after our Blessed Lord to heaven, we must follow in his footsteps, bearing our cross, which we do by submitting with patience to the labours and sufferings of this short life, and embracing them willingly for the love of God. Wherefore our Lord himself said to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." †

Q. What else did He suffer?

A. He was nailed to the cross, and died upon it between two thieves.

It was by the cruel punishment of crucifixion that our Blessed Lord accomplished our Redemption; *He was nailed to the cross, and died upon it between two thieves.* Of all punishments, that of crucifixion was held in the greatest horror both by Jews and Romans. The Romans would not allow any, except the vilest of slaves and the greatest of criminals, to die on the cross; and it was for this very reason, and out of their extreme hatred to our Lord, that the chief priests urged on the Jews to cry out to Pilate, when he proposed to release Jesus, "Crucify him, crucify him." ‡

\* John, xix. 5, 6. † Matt. xvi. 24. ‡ John, xix. 6.

Jesus then, having carried his cross to Calvary, was rudely seized by the executioners, stripped of his clothes, laid on the cross, and his hands and feet most cruelly fastened to it with large iron nails, which were driven through and through his Sacred Flesh, deep into the hard wood. The cross was then raised in the air, and, amid the jeers of the people, let fall, with a heavy jolt, into the hole prepared for it. Who can imagine the horrible sufferings which our dear Lord endured during this cruel torment, and which he bore with such patience through love for us, that the Holy Scripture compares him to a meek and gentle lamb, which makes no resistance and utters no complaint when violence is offered it? "He shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth." \* For three hours that our Lord hung upon the cross, he suffered all the horrors of the most cruel martyrdom. His body was racked with pain, and his heart was torn with grief at the sight of our sins and ingratitude. He had also to endure the scoffs of the soldiers, the mockery of the Jews, and the reproaches of the impenitent thief, one of the two who were crucified with him. The sight of his afflicted Mother standing at his feet, with her heart pierced by a sword of sorrow, also caused him great anguish, and, to crown all, he was seemingly abandoned by his Heavenly Father, his soul being deprived of all comfort, and plunged in deep desolation. Yet, in the midst of all these torments he thought of us, prayed for us, and loved us, as his seven last words show, particularly that by which he gave us to the Blessed Virgin to be her children, and asked her to become our mother.† At length, crying out with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," ‡ he expired.

\* Is. liii. 7.

† John, xix. 26.

‡ Luke, xxiii. 46.

## THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

In the beautiful history of the sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham, we have a striking figure of our Blessed Lord bearing his cross to Calvary, and sacrificed upon it in obedience to his Father's Will. Listen to this touching story, as it is related in the Holy Scripture.

"After these things God tempted Abraham, and said to him, *Abraham, Abraham.* And he answered, *Here I am.* He said to him, *Take thy only begotten son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of Vision, and there thou shalt offer him for a holocaust, upon one of the mountains which I will show thee.*

"So Abraham rising up in the night, saddled his ass, and took with him two young men and Isaac his son ; and when he had cut wood for the holocaust, he went his way to the place which God had commanded him.

"And on the third day, lifting up his eyes, he saw the place afar off. And he said to the young men, *Stay you here with the ass ; I and the boy will go with speed as far as yonder, and after we have worshipped, will return to you.*

"And he took the wood for the holocaust, and laid it upon Isaac his son, and he himself carried in his hands fire and a sword. And as the two went on together, Isaac said to his father, *My father,* and he answered, *What wilt thou son ? Behold, saith he, fire and wood ; where is the victim for the holocaust ?* And Abraham said, *God will provide himself a victim for an holocaust, my son.* So they went on together.

"And they came to the place which God had shown him, where he built an altar, and laid the wood in order upon it ; and when he had bound Isaac his son, he laid him on the altar upon the pile of wood. And he put forth his hand and took the sword to sacrifice his son.

"And behold an Angel of the Lord from heaven called to him, saying, *Abraham, Abraham.* And he answered, *Here I am.* And he said to him, *Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou anything to him ; now I know thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake.* Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw behind his back a ram amongst the briers, sticking fast by the horns, which he took and offered for a holocaust instead of his son."—*Gen. xxii.*

Q. Why did he suffer ?

A. For our sins.

Jesus Christ suffered and died *for our sins.* This, my dear children, is the great mystery of our Blessed

Lord's Love, by which he has established the strongest of all claims to our love and gratitude. By suffering and dying to save us from the punishment of our sins, he has proved to us how infinitely the love of God for his creatures surpasses the strongest love of man for his fellow men. For where shall we find the friend so generous and devoted as to be ready to lay down his own life to save that of his dearest friend, much less to die for one who was his bitter enemy? And yet Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has died to save us, who were his enemies, nay who crucified him by our sins. Wherefore our Blessed Lord said to his disciples, "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." \* And St. Paul, as it were, taking up the words of our Lord, adds, "God commendeth his charity towards us," that is to say, proveth the greatness of his Love towards us; "because, when as yet we were *sinners*, Christ died for us." †

Since, then, Christ died to save us from the punishment of our sins, it follows that it was our sins which were the real cause of our Blessed Lord's Death. I say *our* sins, because it was not only for the sin of Adam that our Lord suffered and died, or for the sins that were committed before our Saviour came upon earth, but also for the sins that are committed daily by each one of us. For all sin is an injury against Almighty God, and requires a proper atonement or satisfaction to be made for it,—an atonement which, as you have already seen, none but God himself could make. Therefore it was, that the Son of God became man and died upon the cross. It was not, indeed, strictly necessary that our Blessed Lord should die so cruel a death. One single suffering, one drop of blood, would have been sufficient to redeem mankind; for even the smallest

\* John, xv. 13.

† Rom. v. 8.

suffering of a God, made man, has an infinite value in the sight of God, and is more than enough to atone for the sins of the whole world. Why then did our Lord suffer so much? To give more honour to his Heavenly Father, to show us the greatness of his Love, and to inspire us with a greater horror for sin, which caused him such cruel torments, He would have us, for very love and gratitude, give over sinning.

We should also learn, my dear children, from the cruel sufferings and death of our Blessed Lord, to embrace willingly, for the love of him, the sufferings and trials which he may see good to send us,—nay, to be even ready, were it necessary, to lay down our lives for Him who died for us. It was the thought of what Jesus Christ had suffered for the love of them, which made the most cruel torments so sweet to the martyrs, and caused them to go as readily and joyfully to the place of execution, as others will go to an entertainment or marriage feast. Listen now, and I will tell you how well some of the Apostles and disciples of our Lord have proved their love to their crucified Saviour.

#### ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE.

St. Andrew, the elder brother of St. Peter, and the first of the Apostles whom Christ called, followed his Divine Master to heaven by the same royal way of the cross. It is related in his life, that when he was led out to be crucified, as soon as he perceived at a distance the cross on which he was to suffer, he cried out, in a transport of love, "Hail precious cross, that hast been consecrated by the Body of my Lord, and adorned with His limbs as with rich jewels! I come to thee exulting and glad; receive me with joy into thy arms. O good cross, that hast received beauty from our Lord's limbs, I have ardently loved thee; long have I desired and sought thee; now thou art found by me, and art made ready for my longing soul. Receive me into thy arms, taking me from among men, and present me to my Master, that He, who redeemed me *on* thee, may receive me *by* thee." So saying,

he gave up his body to the executioners, and finished his holy life by a glorious death.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

You perhaps do not know, my dear children, that, as St. Patrick is the patron of Ireland, and St. George of England, so is the Apostle St. Andrew the patron of Scotland; and the cross which he loved so ardently has always a place on her national flag.

#### LORD, WHERE ART THOU GOING ?

The little chapel of the "*Domine quo vadis, Lord, where art thou going ?*" situated on one of the roads that lead out of the city of Rome, brings to the mind of the traveller a beautiful incident that took place on that very spot eighteen hundred years ago.

It is related in the life of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, that the Emperor Nero, having raised a cruel persecution against the Church, the Christians of Rome earnestly entreated St. Peter to withdraw from that city for a while, that he might preserve a life so valuable to the whole Church. The Apostle, though unwilling, at length yielded to their entreaties, and under the darkness of night made his escape through the Appian gate, and turned his back upon Rome. He had not proceeded far, however, when he met our Blessed Lord bearing his cross, and toiling painfully under the weight of it, on his road towards the city. St. Peter, thunderstruck at what he saw, exclaimed "*Lord, where art thou going ?*" On which our Saviour, casting upon him a look of gentle reproach, replied, "*I am going to Rome to be crucified again.*" St. Peter at once understood that our Blessed Lord wished to reprove him for his cowardice, and perceiving from this that it was the Will of God that he should return to Rome and there suffer, he repassed the gate and re-entered the city. Soon after he was apprehended and confined in the Mamertine prison, along with St. Paul. Being condemned to be crucified, and led to execution, he begged as a special favour, that he might be crucified with his head downwards, saying, that he did not consider himself worthy to suffer in the same manner as his Divine Master. The request was granted, and thus St. Peter added to the glory of martyrdom the crown of humility.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### THE MARTYRS OF JAPAN.

During the cruel persecution raised by the Japanese Emperor Taicosama against the true religion, a glorious band of

twenty-six Christians were condemned to suffer the barbarous punishment of crucifixion. Among this noble company of heroes were three young boys, the oldest of whom was not more than fifteen years of age. These generous youths showed no less courage than those who were more advanced in years; and the youngest especially, a boy of ten, named Louis, was remarkable for the extreme eagerness and joy with which he welcomed his cruel martyrdom. The Japanese general, touched with pity at his youth and amiable qualities, offered him, not only his life, but a place in his own household, on condition that he would abandon his religion; but Louis nobly answered, "On such a worthless condition as you propose, I reject the offer of life. Would you have me barter eternal happiness for a few fleeting years of temporal existence?" The same generous child, on arriving at the place of execution, as soon as the cross which was prepared for him, and which was smaller and shorter than the others, was pointed out, ran eagerly to it and stretched himself upon it, exclaiming, "Paradise, Paradise." The same cheerful readiness was displayed by the rest of this noble band, who esteemed themselves happy to die for Jesus, and to die on the cross. Their hands and feet being secured to the wood by means of iron rings, according to the custom of the country, the crosses were raised in the air, and let fall into the holes which had been dug to receive them. On being raised aloft upon his cross, the young Antony, who had been taught by the Jesuit fathers to chant the Divine Office, began to intone the psalm "*Laudate pueri Dominum; Praise the Lord ye children.*" Meanwhile the rest of the holy martyrs encouraged each other, and exhorted the people, who stood in crowds to witness the moving sight. At length, at a given signal, the executioners approached, and, passing from one to another among the glorious band, pierced them with their spears, and thus set free their happy souls to fly to the embraces of their crucified God. This noble company of martyrs have been lately canonised by our holy Pontiff, Pope Pius IX.—*Jesuit Martyrs of Japan.*

In the eagerness of these glorious martyrs, some of them mere children like yourselves, to suffer and die for Christ, you see the exact fulfilment of those words of our Lord, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." \* And again, "Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise." †

\* John, xii. 32.

† Matt. xxi. 16.

## TENTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Fourth Article—Continued. Good Friday. The Sign of the Cross.*

Q. Upon what day did He suffer ?

A. On Good Friday.

The day on which our Blessed Redeemer died on the cross, is called *Good Friday*. It is called *Good*, because the Goodness of God to man has been more displayed on this day than on any other, namely, by his dying a cruel death to redeem us. Moreover, there is no other day in the year on which so great a good has come to us, as on this day, on which the anger of God was appeased, and the work of our Redemption accomplished.

To remind us of the great mysteries of our Blessed Lord's Passion and Death, and also to excite us to a lively sorrow for our sins, which have been the cause of his cruel sufferings, the Church has appointed that on this day the cross, which has been veiled with purple in sign of grief, since Passion Sunday, should be uncovered, and that all the faithful should come and kneel before, and kiss the image of our crucified Saviour. This beautiful ceremony is called the *Kissing of the Cross*, and sometimes the *Adoration of the Cross*. Protestants say that this is idolatry, but you know very well that you do not adore the cross, as if it were God, which would be idolatry indeed, but that you honour it with a less and inferior honour out of respect to Him, who died upon it. He it is, who died upon the cross, whom we adore; and, out of reverence and love for Him,

we kneel before and kiss that which reminds us of his sufferings. This lesser and relative honour used in former times to be called *adoration*, and in this sense the word *adoration* is often used in the Holy Scriptures, as when we read of Abraham falling down and adoring the three Angels who were sent by God to destroy the wicked city of Sodom.\* If, then, you take *adoration* to mean, as it used to mean, and as it still means in speaking of the cross, a less and inferior honour, which may be paid to creatures, it is true to say that we do *adore the Cross*. But if you mean by *adoration* that highest kind of honour, which can only be paid to God, which is now the general meaning of the word, then it is not the Cross we adore, but *Him who died upon the Cross*.

#### CONVERSION OF ST. JOHN GUALBERT.

St. John Gualbert, a holy monk, and the founder of a religious order, may be said to have owed his conversion to an act of virtue, which he performed one Good Friday, in honour of our Blessed Lord's Death upon the Cross. He was at that time a gay young nobleman, full of spirit and of courage, but unhappily he cherished in his heart a bitter feeling of revenge against a neighbouring gentleman, who in a quarrel had killed his brother Hugh. John had determined to take the life of the murderer wherever he should find him, and he was encouraged in this resolution by his father, who told him that this was the only way to wipe out the insult offered to the honour of the family.

While the young nobleman was occupied only with thoughts of revenge, and was eagerly seeking an opportunity for the commission of the deed, it happened that, riding to Florence upon Good Friday, he met the murderer in so narrow a passage that it was impossible for either of them to avoid the other. John, who was armed, and attended by his servant, immediately drew his sword, and was going to despatch his enemy, when suddenly the latter, falling on his knees, and stretching out his arms in the form of a cross, besought him, for the love of Jesus Christ, who was crucified on that very day, to spare his life. The remembrance of Christ, who prayed for his murderers on the cross, exceedingly affected the young

\* Gen. xviii. 2.

nobleman. He threw himself from his horse, and gently raised the suppliant with his hand, saying, "I can refuse nothing that is asked of me for the sake of Jesus Christ. I not only give you your life, but also my friendship for ever. Pray for me that God may pardon me my sins." They then embraced each other and parted. Continuing his journey, John entered the first church that he came to, and, prostrating himself in prayer before a large crucifix, begged with many tears and earnest supplications that God would grant him pardon for his sins. Hereupon the crucifix bowed its head as if in token that his prayer was heard, and that the generous sacrifice, which he had made of his resentment, was accepted by God. Attached to this church was a Benedictine Monastery, to which the young nobleman repaired as soon as he had finished his prayer, in order to beg the favour of admission. His request was granted, and from that time he gave himself up entirely to prayer and works of penance, by which he made such rapid progress in virtue that he became an illustrious Saint, and a bright ornament of the Church of Christ. —*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. Where did He suffer ?

A. On Mount Calvary.

Our Blessed Lord suffered *upon Mount Calvary*. This, my dear children, was the public place of execution for criminals, and was situated just outside of the city of Jerusalem. The word Calvary means properly *the place of skulls*, and it was so called, no doubt, from the number of human skulls which were found in the ground about, for the criminals were commonly buried close by the spot where they were executed. Our Blessed Lord, also, was buried at a little distance from the spot where he had suffered; but His Sacred Body was laid by St. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in a private tomb, hewn out of the solid rock, and in which no man had yet been laid. This tomb is situated at the foot of Mount Calvary, and a splendid church was afterwards erected over it by St. Helen, mother of Constantine the Great, which is called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

## THE FINDING OF THE TRUE CROSS.

When Constantine the Great had, by his miraculous victory over the pagan Emperor, Maxentius, put a stop to the long persecution, and established the Christian religion throughout his dominions, his pious mother, St. Helen, though then eighty years of age, undertook a journey to the Holy Land to satisfy her devotion by visiting the Holy Places. Being arrived at Jerusalem, she was filled with a longing desire of finding the very cross on which our Blessed Lord had suffered and died. On consulting the oldest and most experienced of the inhabitants, she was informed that, if she could only find the place of our Lord's Burial, she would be sure to find his cross at a little distance, as it was the custom among the Jews to bury all the instruments of execution near to the body of the criminal. St. Helen accordingly caused all the profane buildings in the neighbourhood to be cleared away, and especially a temple of Venus, which the pagans had built over the very spot where our Blessed Lord had been buried. Then, digging to a great depth, she found not only the tomb, but likewise three crosses, with the nails and other instruments of the Passion.

It was now plain that one of these three crosses was that on which our Blessed Lord had died, and that the other two were the crosses of the two thieves. But how were they to distinguish which was the one they were in search of? In this difficulty the holy Bishop Macarius, knowing that one of the principal ladies of the city lay extremely ill, suggested to the Empress that the three crosses should be carried in solemn procession to the sick person, not doubting that God would discover by a miracle which was the cross on which his Divine Son had died for our Redemption. This being done, St. Macarius, after earnest prayer, applied the crosses singly to the sick lady, who, at the touch of the third, was restored to perfect health. St. Helen, filled with joy, built a magnificent church over the spot where she had discovered the sacred relic, and there placed part of the precious wood, enclosed in a costly case. The remainder she carried to Europe, and deposited a portion of it at Rome, in the Church of the Holy Cross, which she built to receive it, and where it remains to the present day.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. Why do we make the sign of the cross ?

A. To put us in mind of the Blessed Trinity; and that God the Son died for us upon the cross.

The sign of the cross is the mark and badge of a Christian. It is by this sign that we publicly profess our faith in the Blessed Trinity, and in Jesus Christ crucified. This holy sign has been used in all ages of the Church, and comes down from the time of the Apostles. Tertullian, who lived about 150 years after Christ, tells us that in his time the Christians used it at the beginning of every action. "In every action", he says, "when we come in or go out, when we put on our clothes, sit down to table, or go to bed, we make the sign of the cross upon our foreheads." \* Armed with this sign, the early Christians feared not to encounter the rack, the sword, the fire, or the most deadly instruments of torture; for they knew that our Blessed Lord, who died upon the cross, would support them in the combat. Frequently the plans of the persecutors were disconcerted by the use of this sign. Thus the martyr St. Tiburtius, condemned under the Emperor Dioclesian to walk through a blazing fire, made the sign of the cross over it, and walked over the burning coals without experiencing any injury.

Read the lives of the Saints, my dear children, and you will find that devils have been cast out, the sea calmed, the sick cured, the dead raised to life, and the most wonderful miracles performed by the devout use of the sign of the cross. The Church accordingly, knowing well the power of this holy sign, uses it continually in the daily office recited by her ministers, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in the administration of the Sacraments, and in all her sacred ceremonies. She exhorts her children also to use it frequently, both as a profession of their faith and a protection against the artifices of the devil. For the devil trembles, and is confounded at the sight of this holy sign, knowing that our Divine

\* Tertul. *De Corona* c. iii.

Redeemer has overcome him by the cross. Like a child that fears the rod with which he has been beaten, so does the devil tremble and flee away when he sees us arm ourselves with the sign of the cross. We should therefore often make use of it when we find ourselves tempted to sin. If we are by ourselves, we could make it as we usually do ; but if we are with others, we could make a little cross with our thumb upon our breasts, repeating, if possible, the words in secret. As soon as we wake in the morning, our first act should be to make the sign of the cross, and it should be our last act when we lie down to sleep, that we may both rise and sleep under the shadow of the cross of Christ. We should also make it at the beginning and end of our prayers, whenever we enter a church, and before we commence any important action.

#### THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS.

After the cruel persecution of the Christians by the Roman Emperors had lasted for nearly 300 years, Almighty God sent peace to his Church by the miraculous victory of Constantine over the pagan Emperor Maxentius. On the day before the battle there appeared in the sky, in sight of Constantine and the whole army, a brilliant cross of light, with this inscription, "In this thou shalt conquer." The following night our Blessed Lord appeared to Constantine in his sleep, with the same sign, and ordered him to make a copy of it, and use it as his standard in the following battle. Constantine rose early, ordered the standard to be constructed, and caused the sacred sign of the cross to be engraved on his own helmet and the shields of his soldiers. He then marched out to battle, and gained a complete victory. On the same day he entered Rome in triumph, but instead of going to offer sacrifice to the false gods of his ancestors, he published everywhere the vision which he had beheld, and declared that his splendid victory was due only to the God of the Christians. In gratitude for this favour, he not only put a stop to the bloody persecution, which had been raging for so many years, but ordered the worship of idols to be abolished, and the Christian religion to be followed throughout his

dominions. His own conversion, which took place at the same time, was soon followed by that of the greater portion of his subjects."—*Butler's Lives of the Saints.*

Q. What puts us in mind of the Blessed Trinity, when we make the sign of the cross ?

A. The words : In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Yes, it is *the words* themselves that we say, which put us in mind of the Blessed Trinity. For what is the Blessed Trinity ? It is the mystery of three Persons in One God. Now, when we make the sign of the cross, we show that there is only One God in three Persons by saying "*In the name,*" and not in the *names*, "*of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" For the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have one and the same name, which is the Holy Name of God, and one and the same nature, which is the nature of God. The words *In the name* show us, therefore, the unity or one nature of God ; and the words *Of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* show the three Persons in God. Thus, the words of the sign of the cross are a profession of faith in the Blessed Trinity.

Q. What puts us in mind that Christ suffered for us on the cross ?

A. The very form of the cross which we make on ourselves.

As the *words* of the sign of the cross are a profession of faith in the Blessed Trinity, so *the form of the cross, which we make on ourselves*, is a profession of faith in Jesus Christ crucified. Formerly, my dear children, the cross was considered a mark of disgrace, and whoever died upon the cross was looked upon as infamous ; but, since the Son of God redeemed us by his death upon the cross, it has been considered the glorious mark and badge of a Christian. The Church of Christ has adopted this

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holy sign as her standard, and places it everywhere as the symbol of hope and the pledge of victory. You see it on her churches, above her altars, on her sacred vestments, in her solemn processions, at the tombs of her departed children; and were you to pass over to Catholic countries, you would behold it at the entrance of the ports, at the corners of the streets, on the summits of the hills. Everywhere you would see the cross, the standard of the Church, the standard of Jesus Christ,—that glorious sign which makes the heart of the Christian rejoice, and fills him with courage and hope. But the Church wishes also that her children should bear this sacred mark upon their persons, which we do by frequently signing ourselves with the sign of the cross.

Now, let me see in what manner you make the sign of the cross. Not hastily, I hope, or irreverently, as if you thought not of what you are doing, or as if you were playing with your fingers, or employing them in catching flies. No, the sign of the cross must be made slowly, reverently, devoutly; slowly and reverently because it is a solemn and a sacred act, and devoutly, because if made with a devout heart it will be the means of drawing down the grace of God upon the soul. And notice it must be a real cross, from the head to the breast, and from the left to the right shoulder, and should be made while these words are pronounced, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Then join your hands and say “Amen.”

#### THE POISONED CUP.

We read in the life of the great St. Benedict, that the fame of the holy life, which he led in a solitary cave of the mountains, having spread far and wide, he was invited to govern a monastery, in which the religious rule was but very

badly observed. St. Benedict for a long time resisted all the entreaties of the monks, remarking that *his* manner of life and *theirs* would never agree. Being at length persuaded to undertake the charge, he did his best to introduce into the monastery the strict observance of the rule, but only succeeded in exciting against himself the hatred of certain wicked monks, who formed a plot to take away his life. They accordingly mixed poison with his drink, and brought it to him as he sat at table with the rest of the community. St. Benedict, according to his custom, extended his hand to make over the glass the sign of the cross, and at the very moment when he formed the holy sign, the glass, which was held at a little distance, was shattered to pieces, as if it had received a sudden blow from a stone. Thereupon the saint, as St. Gregory, who relates this history, observes, "quickly perceived that the glass had death in its contents, since it was not able to bear the sign of life." Wherefore, rising from table, he thus addressed the assembled monks: "Brethren, did I not give you warning that my manner of life and yours would not agree? Go, therefore, and seek a superior according to your liking, for me you can have no longer with you." Having said this, he at once quitted the monastery, and returned to the beloved solitude which he had been so unwilling to quit.—*Dialogues of St. Gregory.*

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## ELEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Fifth Article. Jesus Christ. His Descent into hell and Resurrection.*

Q. What is the fifth article of the Creed?

A. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead.

This article contains the history of our Blessed Lord during the three days which followed his death, that is to say, from the afternoon of Good Friday till

the morning of Easter Sunday. You will notice that it is divided into two parts;

The first speaks of the Descent of our Blessed Lord into hell;

The second, of his Resurrection from the dead.

Q. What means, He descended into hell?

A. It means, that as soon as Christ was dead, His soul went down into that part of hell called Limbo.

Q. What do you mean by Limbo?

A. I mean a place of rest, where the souls of the just who died before Christ were detained.

You see, then, my dear children, that when we say that our Blessed Lord *descended into hell*, we do not mean that he went down into that place of torments where the devils and the souls of the damned are. No, never will those unhappy beings be gladdened with the light of his beautiful countenance. Could they behold Him, the darkness of hell would become light as the heavens, and they would forget their torments in gazing on his Beauty and in the joy of his Divine Presence.

Where was it, then, that our Blessed Lord went down to? It was to *Limbo*, which was not a place of torments, but a *place of rest*,—not the dwelling-place of the damned, but a place *where the souls of the just*, that is, of those good and holy men, *who had died before Christ, were detained*, or kept until his coming. In fact, it was a kind of middle place, neither heaven, nor hell, as purgatory is a kind of middle place, but with this difference, that purgatory is a place of *punishment*, where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins; but Limbo was a place of *rest*, where the souls of those holy persons who had died without sin of their own committing, or who had already satisfied the Justice of God, were

kept for a time until the coming of our Divine Redeemer. Here they had long and anxiously expected the dawning of that happy day on which the Son of God, by his death on the cross, would open the gates of heaven and put an end to their imprisonment. At length the long looked for day arrived, and no sooner had our Lord expired upon the cross, than his Blessed Soul, leaving his Sacred Body, went down to Limbo to carry to those captive souls the glad tidings of their Redemption. You may imagine what joy there must have been in Limbo on that great occasion. How those holy souls would flock about their loving Saviour to adore, to praise, and to thank him !

Do you know, my dear children, the names of any who are likely to have been in Limbo on that happy day ? No doubt our first parents, Adam and Eve, who had done a long and severe penance for their sin, of which it is commonly believed that they sincerely repented. Then there would be the innocent Abel, and the holy patriarch Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph ; Moses, also, and Samuel, David, and the prophets. There would be also thousands of others who had led good and virtuous lives, or who had during life atoned for their sins by true repentance and works of penance, rendered pleasing to God by the merits of the Saviour to come, or else who had passed through the purifying flames of purgatory. Last of all, there would be holy Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus Christ and spouse of the Blessed Virgin, who had, a few years before, died peacefully in the arms of Jesus and Mary. But you will wonder, perhaps, why such great Saints were kept waiting so long in Limbo. Tell me, then,

**Q.** Why were they detained there ?

**A.** Because none could go up to heaven before our Saviour.

H 3

Yes ; *because none could go up to heaven before our Saviour.* But why could they not, if they were good and holy, and kept Almighty God's commandments ? Because the gates of heaven were closed since the sin of our first parents ; God was angry with man, and his anger had not yet been appeased. Adam had toiled and laboured, and watered the ground, which he tilled, with tears of repentance. His descendants, too, had suffered the bitter consequences of his sin and their own fresh offences ; but all the sufferings of guilty man could not make a sufficient atonement to God for one single sin. It required nothing less than the sufferings of a God, made man, to effect this ; and though Almighty God, in his Infinite Goodness, promised such a Redeemer to our first parents, hundreds,—nay, thousands,—of years passed away and he came not. Yet, for all that, those who died before his coming were not lost, provided that they believed in the Saviour who was promised, hoped in his Goodness, loved him with their whole heart, and sincerely repented of their sins. This was sufficient to restore them to the favour of God through the merits of the Redeemer who was to come. But they could not enter heaven before he *had* come, to pay the debt due to the Justice of God by his Passion and Death, and, therefore, they were detained in Limbo until his coming. Now, when our Blessed Lord expired on the cross, the debt was paid, and his Divine Soul, leaving for three short days his Sacred Body, hastened down to Limbo to bear to those holy souls, who had so long and ardently expected him, the news of their approaching deliverance. Yet, a few short days and they should ascend with him, in joyful company, to take possession of his heavenly kingdom on the day of his Ascension, when he would present them to his Heavenly Father as the first fruits of his glorious victory.

**Q.** What means the third day He rose again from the dead ?

**A.** It means, that after Christ had been dead and buried part of three days, He raised His blessed body to life again on the third day.

The second part of this article, which we now come to, is about our Blessed Lord's Resurrection, which took place on the third day after he was crucified. While he was yet alive, Jesus had, on different occasions, openly declared that He would raise his Body to life again on the third day. "I lay down my life," he said to his disciples, "that I may take it again." \* And again, "The Son of Man shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon. And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and *the third day he shall rise again.*" † And on another occasion, when the Jews asked him for a sign of his Divine mission, he had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." In these mysterious words he alluded to his future Resurrection, though the Jews, and even his own disciples, thought at the time that he spoke of the Jewish temple or church, in which the solemn sacrifices were offered. "But he spoke," as the Holy Scripture adds, "of the temple of his Body." §

The time was now come when our Blessed Lord was to accomplish these prophecies, and prove to the world by a wonderful miracle, which was far beyond the power of mortal man, that he was, what he had declared himself to be, truly the Son of God. That no doubt, however, might possibly remain in the minds of men as to the reality of his Death and the truth of his Resurrection, he would first be laid in the tomb after the manner of other men when they are dead, and remain there for three days.

\* John, x. 17.

† Luke, xviii. 32, 33.

‡ John, ii. 19, 21.

Accordingly, when it was known that our Blessed Lord had expired upon the cross, a certain just or holy man named Joseph, a native of the city of Arimathea, who had all along been a disciple of Christ, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, went in boldly to Pilate, and begged that the Body of Jesus might be given up to him for burial. Pilate having consented, Joseph went along with Nicodemus, who was also, secretly, a disciple of our Lord, to the hill of Calvary, where they found our Blessed Lady, still transfixed with grief, at the foot of the cross, on which hung the lifeless Body of her Divine Son. With respectful tenderness, the two holy men unfastened the nails which secured the Hands and Feet to the wood of the cross, and, taking down the Sacred Body of Jesus from the altar of its sacrifice, laid it in the arms of his afflicted Mother. Mary, with a heart full of anguish, but with a heroic fortitude, prepared it for burial, wrapping it up with rich spices in clean linen cloths, according to the custom of the Jews. She then, with the assistance of Joseph and Nicodemus, laid it in the tomb which was close at hand, "a new sepulchre," as the Holy Scripture says, "hewed," or hollowed, "out of a rock wherein no man had yet been laid." \* This tomb or sepulchre, therefore, was not a grave dug out of the earth, such as we bury in, but a little cave or room made in the side of the rock, as was usual among the Jews.

Now, it was well known among the Jews that our Blessed Lord had prophesied, when he was alive, that he would rise again from the dead on the third day. The chief priests and Pharisees went, therefore, to Pilate, and begged of him to set a guard of soldiers over the tomb, lest, as they said, his disciples should come and steal away his body during the night,

\* John, xix. 41 ; Mark, xv. 46.

and then say that he had risen again. Pilate told them that they might set a guard there themselves, if they pleased ; and they accordingly set soldiers to keep watch, and put a seal on the stone, which was rolled to the mouth of the tomb, that they might be able to tell whether any one had entered.\* By taking these precautions, they became in the hands of God witnesses of the truth of our Blessed Lord's Resurrection. At the first dawn of morning on Easter Sunday, there came a great earthquake, and, behold, an Angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, rolled back the stone and sat upon it. "His countenance," as the Holy Scripture says, "was as lightning, and his raiment as snow ; and for fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men."† Meanwhile, the Blessed Soul of Jesus, which, as you have seen, had gone down to Limbo to carry consolation to the poor souls there detained, returned to his Sacred Body ; and his Body, thus restored to life by the presence of the Soul, cast aside the linen cloths in which it was bound, and put on a robe of majesty and splendour, like to that which dazzled the eyes of the Apostles when they beheld our Blessed Lord on Mount Thabor. Then did our Saviour rise from the tomb, in sight of the astonished guards, glorious and immortal, showing us, my dear children, that he had gained the victory over death, and giving us a pledge that we shall one day rise with him in glory, if we keep his Divine commandments. He has also, in his Resurrection, given us a striking proof that he is truly God as well as man ; for if he died on the cross as man, he raised himself from the dead by his Almighty Power as God.

Q. On what day did Christ rise again from the dead ?

A. On Easter Sunday.

\* Matt. xxvii. 62, &c.

† Matt. xxviii. 3, 4.

It was on *Easter Sunday* morning that the glorious Resurrection of our Blessed Lord took place, and Easter, therefore, is a day of triumph, and the most solemn festival in the whole year. The Jews kept Easter sacred to commemorate their deliverance from the slavery of the Egyptians; but we, with much more reason, keep it sacred to commemorate our deliverance from the slavery of the devil. The Jewish festival was a figure of ours, and their deliverance from earthly bondage was a figure of our greater deliverance from a spiritual slavery, the slavery of sin and the devil.

Sometimes you hear Easter called the Pasch, and the time between Easter and Whitsuntide is usually called the Paschal time. The word Pasch, or Pass-over, is the old Jewish name given by the command of God himself to this festival. You remember, I dare say, that on the night before the Israelites escaped from Egypt, they were ordered by God to sacrifice a lamb in each family, and to sprinkle the doorposts of their houses with its blood. In the dead of the night a destroying angel was sent by God to slay the first-born of the Egyptians, but he *passed over* the houses of the Israelites, and entered nowhere where he beheld the blood of the lamb. Hence, the festival observed in memory of this event was called the Pasch or *Passing over* of the angel, and the lamb which was sacrificed was called the Paschal lamb. This lamb was a beautiful figure of our Blessed Lord, whose Precious Blood was shed on the cross for our salvation, and is sprinkled on our souls in the Holy Sacraments. It is by the shedding of this Sacred Blood that we were set free from the slavery of the devil; neither has that great destroying angel any power to hurt or harm our souls, if he sees upon them the Blood of the Lamb of God.

You know, my dear children, that after our

Blessed Lord had risen from the dead, he showed himself to his disciples many times during the forty days that he remained on earth before his Ascension into heaven. No doubt his first visit was to his Blessed Mother, though it is not related in the Holy Scripture. The first, that we have an account of, is the appearance of our Lord to St. Mary Magdalen, who had been a public sinner, but was now a sincere penitent, as she had shown by staying to the last along with our Blessed Lady at the foot of the cross. The history of this apparition is so beautiful, that I will tell it to you as we find it related by St. John.

APPEARANCE OF OUR BLESSED LORD TO ST. MARY  
MAGDALEN.

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalen cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre; and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre. She ran, therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Peter, therefore, went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying, but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. The disciples, therefore, departed again to their home.

But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and she saw two Angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She saith to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her,

"Woman, why weepest thou?" She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to him, "Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus saith to her, "Mary." She turning, saith to him, "Rabboni," which is to say Master. Jesus saith to her, "Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, *I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.*" Mary Magdalen cometh, and telleth the disciples, "I have seen the Lord, and these things he said to me."—*John, xx.*

#### INCRECULITY OF ST. THOMAS.

When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be to you." And when he had said this, he showed them his Hands and his Side. The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord. He said, therefore, to them again, "Peace be to you." As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them, and he said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Except I shall see in his Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his Side, I will not believe."

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be to you." Then he saith to Thomas, "Put in thy finger hither, and see my Hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my Side, and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God." Jesus saith to him, "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed."—*John, xx.*

TWELFTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Sixth Article. Jesus Christ. His Ascension.*

Q. What is the sixth article of the Creed?

A. He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

After our Blessed Lord had risen from the dead upon Easter Sunday, he remained for forty days on the earth, to prove to his disciples the truth of his Resurrection, and to complete the great work of the establishment of his Church. Already, as you know, he had chosen out of those who came to listen to his Divine teaching, twelve favoured disciples, who are called Apostles. These twelve he had carefully instructed, and, at his last supper, had ordained them priests, that, after He should have ascended into heaven, they might teach to others what He had taught to them, offer the Holy Sacrifice of his Body and Blood, and administer the Sacraments which he had instituted. But he had not as yet actually sent them on their mission, and there were many powers which he had promised, but which he had not as yet given them. For example, he had promised to make St. Peter the visible head of his Church, but, being Himself still visibly present with his disciples, he had not as yet done so. Again, he had promised to give his Apostles power to forgive sins, but as He Himself was still on earth for poor sinners to have recourse to, he had not as yet given them this power. All this, however, he did during the forty days that he remained upon earth after his Resurrection and before his Ascension into heaven. During this time

he frequently appeared to his disciples, told them what to do when he should have gone visibly from among them, and gave them the powers which he had promised.

Q. What means, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ?

A. Not that God the Father has hands, for He is a pure spirit; but that Christ as man, holds the next place to God in Heaven.

Q. Why do you say as man ?

A. Because as God, He is equal to the Father in all things.

God the Father has no hands, my dear children, because he has no body, but is a pure Spirit. God the Son has a body, because he took a human body like ours, that he might suffer and die for us ; but neither God the Father, nor God the Holy Ghost have any body. Why then do we say that Jesus Christ is seated at his Heavenly Father's *right hand* ? Because this is only another way of saying that Jesus Christ, *as man, holds the next place in honour and dignity to God in heaven.* As God, he has the *same place, because, as God, he is equal to the Father and the Holy Ghost in all things* ; but, as man, he has only the second place, because man is always less than God. Man is always the creature of God ; and even our Blessed Lord's human Body and Soul were made by God. But because his Sacred Body and Soul were closely united in one Person with his Divinity or Godhead, therefore they are worthy to be adored as God, and are infinitely above all other creatures. Hence in his ever blessed human nature he is raised in heaven far above all the Saints and Angels, and holds the highest place next to Almighty God, or as we say in the Apostles' Creed, *sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.* For you know the highest honour which a king or emperor can show to any one is to set him at his right

hand. If the queen, for example, were to make a great feast, and wished to show particular honour to one of the guests whom she had invited, she would say to him, "Come and sit at my right hand." In like manner Almighty God, as the prophet David tells us, said to our Blessed Lord, *as man*, on the day of his Ascension into heaven, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool." \* And again, St. Paul says, "To which of the Angels said he at any time, *sit on my right hand*." †

Q. When did our Saviour go up to heaven?

A. On Ascension-day; forty days after He had risen again.

Our Blessed Saviour went up to heaven on Ascension-day. As this feast is always forty days after Easter Sunday, it falls every year on the same day of the week, Thursday, wherefore it is sometimes called Ascension Thursday. It is one of the great feasts of the year, and is a Holiday of Obligation, that is, a day on which every one is obliged to hear Mass the same as upon Sunday. For it is just that we should keep that day a great feast on which our Lord completed his labours upon earth, and entered in glory and triumph into the possession of his heavenly kingdom.

It is related in the Holy Scripture, that our Blessed Redeemer, having given his last instructions to his Apostles, led them forth to Mount Olivet, near to the village of Bethania. This little village, the abode of Martha and Mary, had often been the resting place of Jesus after the labours of his public preaching in the neighbouring city of Jerusalem, from which Bethania is about two miles distant. Near to the same spot, and situated likewise at the foot of Mount Olivet, was the village of Gethsemani and the Garden

\* Ps. cix. 1.    † Heb. i. 13.

of Olives, where our Bessed Lord had a few weeks before, suffered his cruel agony, and been betrayed by Judas into the hands of his enemies. The same place was now to be the scene of his most glorious triumph. Having reached the summit of the Mount with his twelve Apostles, he gently raised himself from the ground, and lifting up his hands gave them his last parting blessing. Then by the same Almighty Power, by which he had burst the bonds of death and risen from the tomb, he rose from the earth, and ascended to the heavens, until at length a bright cloud hid him from the eyes of his wondering disciples. Thousands of Angels no doubt accompanied him with joyful canticles on this his glorious entrance into his heavenly kingdom, along with those happy souls, the first fruits of his victory over hell, whom he had brought from Limbo to share his triumph. And tens of thousands of the heavenly host went forth to meet him, and conduct him with songs of triumph and joyous welcome to the glorious throne, prepared for him, as man, at the right hand of his Eternal Father.

Meanwhile the Apostles had followed the ascending form of their Divine Master, as long as they were able, with astonished eyes, but with hearts full of sadness. And still they stood gazing at that bright cloud, which hid from their eyes one whom they had loved and revered so well, but the value of whose Divine Presence they only now seemed fully to understand, when it had departed from them. Our Blessed Lord, however, was not unmindful of the children he had left behind, for, as the Holy Scripture relates, “while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven.*” \*

\* Acts, i. ; Luke. xxiv.

At these words the Apostles were comforted, and, recalling to mind the command which our Lord had given them, to return to Jerusalem after he should have left them, and await there the coming of the Holy Spirit, they left the hill of Olivet, and returned to the holy city. Here they retired into an upper room in the house of one of the disciples, and remained there occupied in prayer and meditation, going out only to assist at the services of the temple, until the solemn feast of Pentecost.

From this beautiful history of our Blessed Lord's Ascension, we must learn, my dear children, not to set our hearts on the things of this world, but on heaven, which is our true country, where Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for us. "In my Father's house," said he to his sorrowful disciples, on the night of his last supper, "there are many mansions. And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be." \* Our Blessed Lord, in rising from the dead, has given us a pledge that we also shall rise from the grave, at the last day, with bodies glorious and resplendent, if, while on earth, we keep his Divine commandments; but, in ascending into heaven, he has given us a further pledge that we shall, at the last day of general judgment, ascend with him to the kingdom of his glory, if we are then found in the number of his elect.

It is related by the holy Fathers, that our Blessed Lord left imprinted on Mount Olivet, on the spot from which he ascended into heaven, the traces of his sacred footsteps. St. Augustine, who lived about four hundred years after Christ, declares that they were there in his day, and St. Paulinus adds that the spot could never be covered with any pavement, though this had often been attempted, and that no

\* John xiv. 2, 3.

violence had ever been able to efface them. These precious relics of our Blessed Redeemer have in all ages been visited by the faithful with the greatest veneration. St. Bernardine tells us that one of these holy pilgrims, who had visited in succession all the places consecrated by the presence of the Son of God upon earth, from Bethlehem to Calvary, on arriving at Mount Olivet and beholding the last traces of his beloved Redeemer, was so overcome by the longing desire of being united to him in heaven, that, while he lay prostrate on the ground, kissing with the tenderest love the sacred footsteps, his soul burst asunder the ties of the body, and took her flight from Mount Olivet to the embraces of Him whom she had so loved and so ardently desired.\*

#### ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR.

St. Stephen, the first of that glorious army of martyrs who soon began to follow in the footsteps of our crucified Lord, was one of the seven deacons who were ordained by the Apostles, to assist them in the instruction of the new converts and the public distribution of alms. This holy man, as the Scripture tells us, was so full of the spirit of God, that he worked many signs and wonders among the people, and spoke with such wisdom and Divine eloquence, that his adversaries were reduced to silence. They accordingly bribed false witnesses to accuse him of having blasphemed Almighty God, and St. Stephen was dragged before the High Priest and the supreme council, or Sanhedrim, to answer to this false charge. Here he spoke with such wisdom and authority that his accusers "were cut to the heart, and gnashed their teeth" with rage and envy; but Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said, *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.*"

"And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And, casting him forth without the city, they stoned him; and the

\* See Alban Butler's *Feasts and Fasts*; also, Guillois' *Explication du Catéchisme*.

witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. And, falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord.”—*Acts*, vi. vii.

#### ST. FELICITAS AND HER SEVEN SONS.

During the reign of the Emperor Antoninus, a noble Roman lady, named Felicitas, was brought before Publius, the prefect or governor of Rome, along with her seven sons, on a charge of practising the Christian religion. Publius, desirous of gaining over the children by means of the mother, took her aside, and earnestly entreated her to have pity on her children, and, by prevailing on them to offer sacrifice to idols, to save their lives and secure for them the favour and rewards of the Emperor. But the holy mother nobly answered, “Do not think to frighten me by threats, or to win me by fair speeches. The compassion you exhort me to would make me the most cruel of mothers. My children will live eternally with Christ if they are faithful to him, but must expect eternal death if they sacrifice to idols.” Then, turning to her children, she said to them, “My sons, look up to heaven, where Jesus Christ with his Saints expects you. Be faithful in his love, and fight courageously for your souls.”

The prefect, enraged, ordered her to be cruelly beaten, and then, calling her children before him, strove to induce them, both by threats and promises, to adore the false gods. The sons answered, with a spirit worthy of their mother, that they would never forsake Jesus Christ, and that they did not fear a passing death, but everlasting torments. The Emperor, being informed of their constancy, condemned each of them to a cruel death. The eldest was scourged to death with leaden plummets. The next two were beaten with clubs till they expired. The fourth was thrown headlong from a precipice. The three youngest, with the heroic mother, were beheaded.—*Butler's Lives of the Saints*.

In trials, afflictions, sufferings, and death itself, let us encourage ourselves by saying, in the words of St. Felicitas, “Look up to heaven, my soul; there Jesus Christ with his Saints awaits you.” Or let us say, with her sons, “I do not fear passing sufferings, but eternal torments.”

## THIRTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

*Seventh Article. Jesus Christ. The General and Particular Judgments.*

Q. What is the seventh article of the Creed ?

A. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

The two Angels who were sent by our Blessed Lord, on the day of his Ascension, to console his afflicted Apostles, while yet they stood gazing on the heavens where he had disappeared from their sight, comforted them with these words, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven."\* It is of the coming of our Blessed Lord to judge mankind that the Angels spoke, and it is in this that we declare our belief when we say, in the seventh article of the Apostles' Creed, *From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*

Sometimes you will hear speak of the first and second coming of our Blessed Lord. His first coming was when he came into the world as a little babe, and was born in the stable at Bethlehem. His coming then was in the midst of poverty, suffering and neglect. But his second coming, which will be at the end of the world, to judge mankind, will be in power, majesty, and glory. For the Father, as our Blessed Lord said to his disciples, "hath

\* Acts i, 11,

given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father."\* Here our Blessed Lord speaks of himself in his human nature, that is, as man. For, *as God*, he has a right to judge his own creatures, but, *as man*, he receives that right from his Heavenly Father.

Our Blessed Lord, therefore, will come to judge us all at the end of the world, but he will also judge each of us at the moment of our death. For there are two judgments, the first or *particular* judgment, which will take place when we die, and in which we shall each be judged separately, and the second or *general* judgment, which will take place at the end of the world in the general assembly of all mankind. You will perhaps wonder why there are two judgments. Is it that the sentence passed upon us when we die will ever be changed or recalled? No, my dear children; but it is fitting that our bodies, which were then dead, but which will have risen again at the last day, should appear along with our souls at the judgment seat of God, to receive the reward or punishment of those good or evil deeds in which they have been their partners during life. Besides, it is for the glory of God that the sentence passed on each one should then be made known to all mankind. It often happens in this life that the good are poor, persecuted, and despised, while the wicked are rich, prosperous, and held in honour and esteem by the world. Thus, if we looked no further than the present life, it might seem to some, who do not bear in mind that the peace of a good conscience and the happiness of a virtuous life are far beyond all worldly advantages, as if the wicked, rather than the good, are the favourites of heaven. But on the day of general judgment the Justice of God will be made manifest to every one. It will then be seen that the

\* John v. 22, 23.

short sufferings of this life, borne with patience for the love of God, have secured for the good an eternity of happiness; while the false pleasures and sinful enjoyments of the wicked are the cause of their eternal damnation. Hence the Holy Scripture describes the wicked as saying at the last day, when they behold the glory of the just, "These are they whom we had some time in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their lives madness and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints." \* Finally, and more than all, the Justice of God requires that his Divine Son himself, so despised, and suffering, and abject among men, should, on the day of general judgment, be glorified in the sight of his enemies, and exalted by his Heavenly Father in proportion to his sufferings and ignominies. Hence, he said to the High Priest Caiphas, when he sought to condemn Him to death, "Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." †

As it is of the last or general judgment that the catechism first speaks, I will now go on to ask you what we are to believe concerning it.

Q. Will Christ ever come again?

A. Yes; He will come down from heaven at the last day to judge all men.

Our Blessed Lord *will come down from heaven at the last day to judge all men.* Every one who has ever been born will have, on that terrible day, to stand before Almighty God to receive his last and final sentence, both the *living*, that is to say, those who are alive on the earth at the day of judgment, and the *dead*, that is, all those who have died since

\* Wisd. v. 3—5.

† Matt. xxvi. 64.

the beginning of the world.\* But when will the last day be? We know not; God only knows. Our Blessed Lord, when he was asked this question by his Apostles, would not tell them, for he said that it belongs to God alone to know the day and the hour. Almighty God has wisely left us in ignorance of it, as he has also of the moment of our death, in order that we may be always prepared for it. But he has told us by the lips of his Divine Son that there will be terrible signs before that day comes, to warn us of its approach. First of all, there will be earthquakes, and wars, and famines, and pestilences, which will fill the whole earth with desolation, and be a warning to sinners that the day of their final punishment is at hand. But for all that, men will go on in their sins, as our Blessed Lord says, just as they did before the deluge, when they were eating, and drinking, and marrying, and giving in marriage, without giving a thought to God or their souls, up to the very day when Noah entered into the ark. Then the floodgates of heaven were opened, mighty torrents of rain fell over the earth, the sea rose, and the water swept over the highest mountains, swallowing up all the wicked sinners who had despised the warnings of God. So shall it be at the last day. While all are sleeping in false security, the fatal day will at length arrive. The sun shall be darkened, the moon refuse her light, and the stars fall down from heaven. The sign of the Son of Man, that is to say, the cross of Jesus Christ, shall then appear shining in the heavens, and He Himself, in the midst of glory and majesty, shall be seen coming in the clouds, attended by his Angels, to judge mankind. The prophet Joel tells us that this last terrible scene

\* The living and the dead may also be understood to mean those who are living the life of grace or who are dead by being in mortal sin. In instructing young children, it might cause confusion to unfold a second sense.

will take place in the valley of Josaphat,\* which lies between Jerusalem and Mount Olivet, within sight of the garden of Gethsemani, the court of Pilate, and the hill of Calvary. Thus will our Blessed Lord be exalted where he has been most humbled, and all sinners be confounded when they behold before their eyes the very spots where He, who will now judge them, died to save them.

Jesus Christ, being now seated on his judgment seat, shall send forth his Angels with a trumpet and a great voice to summon all mankind from the four quarters of the globe to come and receive their sentence. At the sound of this terrible trumpet, the dead shall arise from their graves, and their bodies being again united with their souls, they shall be gathered together before the throne of God to give a strict account of their whole lives and receive their final doom.†

Q. What are the things He will judge?

A. All our thoughts, words, and works.

Yes; *all our thoughts, words, and works*, will then be brought to light, and of each we shall have to give a strict account. So that you see, you will not only be judged for what you have *done*, but for what you have *said* and *thought about*. How many hundred words do you not speak in the day, and how many thousand thoughts pass through your mind! When you get up in the morning, you forget the greater part of what you have said or thought about the day before, and even a good deal of what you have done; but Almighty God has not forgotten any of it, and at the last day he will make it all known, and give you a reward or punishment for each thought, word, and act, according as it has been good or bad. “I saw,” says St. John, “the dead, great and small,

\* Joel iii. 12.

† See Matt. xxiv.; Luke xvii.

standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire." \* See, then, what care we should take to please Almighty God each day, and every moment of the day, since every day, and all the day through, we are working for eternity.

Our Blessed Lord having called each one to a strict account for every thought, word, and work, and having made known to the whole assembled multitude the sins of the wicked, to their great shame and confusion, and the good deeds of the just, to their great joy and consolation, will proceed to pronounce the final sentence. But what will that sentence be? It is already written in the Holy Gospel. Our Blessed Lord told it to the Apostles on that day when they came to him as he was sitting on Mount Olivet, and put to him questions about the end of the world. Tell me, then,

Q. What will he say to the wicked?

A. "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire."

This, my dear children, is the awful sentence which our Blessed Lord himself has told us that he will pronounce, at the last day, upon the wicked: *Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.* Oh, how the wicked will tremble and wither away through fear, and be consumed with rage and despair, when they hear these terrible words pronounced by the lips of a God who never changes his decrees! "*Depart,*" he will say to them, that is, "Begone, get away out of my sight, for you are not worthy to behold the glory and majesty of God, nor the joys

\* Apoc. xx. 12, 15.

that I have prepared for those who love me. Depart, then ; separate yourselves from the good, and separate yourselves *from me* ; but, before you go, take my curse upon you ; yes, the curse of an angry God, whom you have outraged, insulted, and blasphemed ; a curse, which is no sooner spoken than it is executed ; a curse, which covers you with every evil and deprives you of every good. Depart from me, *you cursed.*" But whither ? "*Into everlasting fire* ; into that pit of torments ' prepared for the devil and his angels,'\* where there is eternal ' weeping and gnashing of teeth ;' † ' where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished.' " ‡ No sooner shall these terrible words have been spoken, than the devils will seize upon the damned as their lawful prey, and drag them down, amid shrieks of despair, into the eternal fire of hell.

Q. What will He say to the just ?

A. " Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom which is prepared for you."—*Matt.* xxv. 34.

If the sentence of the wicked is very terrible, how sweet and consoling is that of the good ! *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom which is prepared for you.* How their hearts will beat with joy when they hear those sweet words from the lips of our Blessed Lord ! As much as to say, " Come, my beloved, your troubles are now over ; your dangers, your trials, your sufferings, are no more. Come, receive my blessing and that of my Heavenly Father, and take possession of that happy kingdom of glory which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world, and which, when you had lost it by sin, I purchased for you again by my sufferings and death." Oh, my dear children, how happy will you be if you one day hear that beautiful

\* *Matt.* xxv. 41.

† *Ib.* 30.

‡ *Mark* ix. 43.

sentence from the lips of Jesus Christ! How little will you then think all that you have done and suffered for God in this world, compared with the joy and delight of that moment! But if you wish to hear these consoling words, you must lead good lives. You must shun sin and bad company, keep God's commandments, and perform faithfully all your duties. You must live *for* God, in this world, by always trying to please him, if you would live *with* him for ever in heaven.

## THE LAST JUDGMENT.

When the Son of Man shall come in his majesty and all the Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.

Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you covered me, sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.* Then shall the just answer him, saying, *Lord, when did we see thee hungry and fed thee, thirsty and gave thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and covered thee? Or when did we see thee sick or in prison and came to thee?* And the king, answering, shall say to them, *Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.*

Then shall he say to them also that shall be on his left hand, *Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me not to drink; I was a stranger and you took me not in, naked and you covered me not, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.* Then they also shall answer him, saying, *Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee?* Then he shall answer them, saying, *Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me.*

And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting.—*Matt. xxv. 31, &c.*

#### CONVERSION OF THE BULGARIANS.

The thought of the last judgment is one which is well calculated to make a good impression on our hearts and keep us from committing sin. We even read in the history of the Church, that a picture of that terrible scene was the immediate cause of the conversion of a great nation. I will tell you how this took place.

The Bulgarians, a people dwelling on the banks of the Danube, remained till the ninth century buried in idolatry. About that time, it happened that the sister of the King Boigoris, was taken prisoner by the Emperor of Constantinople, and, during her captivity, was converted to the Christian faith. On her return to her own country, she tried to convince her brother of the folly of idolatry and the beauty and excellence of the Christian religion; but Boigoris, though he admitted the truth of all she said, remained obstinate in the worship of his false gods.

Now it happened that the King, who was engaged in decorating his palace, sent to Constantinople for an artist, hoping to obtain from thence one of greater merit than could be found in his own country. The Emperor sent him a monk, named Methodius, who was remarkable for his skill in painting. Boigoris immediately set him to work, bidding him paint on the walls of the gallery some picture of so terrible a nature that it should strike fear into all who beheld it. The good monk promised to do so, and, while he was at work, caused a curtain to be extended before that portion of the wall which he was decorating, so that the picture might not be seen by any one until it was completed.

When the work was finished, and the day arrived for removing the curtain, the King and all his court assembled to witness the result. The curtain was withdrawn, and the King beheld before his eyes a faithful representation of the last judgment; for Methodius, thinking no scene so terrible as this, had chosen it for his subject. He had represented in lively colours kings, princes, and people standing before the throne of the Great Judge, who appeared armed with all the terrors of Majesty and Justice, and attended by ministering Angels. Other Angels were represented as separating the good from the bad, and placing some on the right and some on the left hand of Almighty God.

The King stood amazed and struck with terror at the sight, and listened eagerly to the instructions of the holy monk, who explained every portion of the picture, exhorting Boigoris, at the same time, to take such steps now, as would secure for himself a place among the Saints of God when that day should at length arrive.

The instructions of Methodius, assisted by the grace of God, were not without effect. Boigoris was shortly after baptized, and his conversion was soon followed by that of the whole nation.—*Butler's Saints' Lives*.

Q. Will not every man be judged at his death, as well as at the last day?

A. Yes; "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, the judgment."—*Heb. ix. 27*.

So far, my dear children, we have been speaking of the *general* judgment of all mankind, which will take place at the end of the world. But there is another judgment, which will take place immediately after our death, when each one will be judged separately, and this is called the *particular* judgment. For, as the Apostle St. Paul says, *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, the judgment*. No sooner, then, shall we have breathed our last, and the soul gone out of the body, than at that very moment our Blessed Lord will come to judge us in the very place where we have expired, and will pass upon us that sentence which he will afterwards confirm at the end of the world. The devil will be there to accuse us, and our Guardian Angel to plead for us; but, alas! he will be obliged to bear witness against us, if we have neglected his warnings and slighted his counsels. In that day, our Lord will judge us with strict justice; there will be no more room for mercy or repentance. As we are found then, so will our sentence be for all eternity, for the Holy Scripture says, that as the tree falls, so shall it lie.\* But what will that sentence be? It will be

\* Eccles. xi, 3.

one of three things,—heaven, hell, or purgatory. If our souls are found perfectly pure and free from sin, they will pass at once to the enjoyment of God in heaven; but our bodies will, as you know, remain in the grave until the day of general resurrection. If we are found in mortal sin, we shall be condemned at once to the eternal torments of hell. But if our souls are stained with lesser sins, or if we have not done sufficient penance for the greater sins of which we have already repented, and for which we have obtained pardon of God, our Blessed Lord will sentence us for a longer or a shorter time to purgatory, that our souls, being there purified from all sin, may be able to pass into that happy kingdom of bliss, into which the Holy Scripture tells us that nothing defiled can ever enter.\*

#### ST. SIMEON AND THE EUNUCH.

During the cruel persecution raised by the King of Persia, Sapor II., against the Christian religion, the venerable St. Simeon, Bishop of Ctesiphon, was apprehended, and brought before the King on a charge of refusing to join in the idolatrous worship of the sun, which in Persia is worshipped as a god. Sapor, having in vain endeavoured by threats and promises to shake his constancy, remanded him to prison till the following day. As the holy martyr was led from the royal presence under a guard of soldiers, he saw, sitting at the gate of the palace, a eunuch, named Usthazanes, who was a special friend and favourite of the King, having had the care of his early training and education. This nobleman had formerly been a Christian, and was still indeed the same at heart, though, to preserve the favour of his royal master, he had consented to adore the sun. Seeing the holy Bishop led past, Usthazanes, who respected him greatly, rose from his seat, and prostrated himself respectfully before him, according to the manner of the Persians. St. Simeon, however, knowing that he had been guilty of an outward act of idolatry, gave him a sharp reproof, and turned away his head from him. This seasonable severity touched Usthazanes to the quick, and caused him to enter seriously into himself,

\* Apoc. xxi. 27.

"Alas," said he, bursting into tears, "if Simeon's rebuke be so grievous, how shall I be able to bear the anger and indignation of God, whom I have so basely denied!" Whereupon, hastening home, he threw off his rich garments, and put on a black robe in sign of mourning. Then, returning to the palace gate, he resumed his seat with every appearance of deep affliction. The King, being informed of it, sent to enquire why he mourned, when his sovereign enjoyed his crown and health. He answered that it was for a double fault, for adoring the creature instead of the Creator, and for imposing on the King by an act of worship performed against his own conscience. Sapor, in a rage, condemned him to death, and Usthazanes was accordingly led to execution, begging, as a last favour, in order that he might repair the scandal of his previous fall, that the crime for which he suffered, namely, that of being a Christian, might be proclaimed before him. Arrived at the place of execution, his head was struck from his body, and thus the shame and guilt of his fall were blotted out by the glory of his martyrdom.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### THE INDIAN CACIQUE.

Soon after the discovery and invasion of North America by the Spaniards, an Indian chieftain or Cacique was brought before the Spanish Governor, charged with conspiracy and attempt to revolt. The Governor sat in his chair of state, surrounded by his officers, and with his naked sword suspended from his belt. The poor Indian stood before him unarmed, half naked and loaded with fetters. When the charge had been read, the Governor, turning to the Cacique, asked him what he had to say in his defence. The poor Indian, having in vain protested his innocence, at length advancing to the Governor's feet, and taking hold, with his fettered hand, of the glittering steel, said, in tones of true sincerity, "Judge for yourself, Governor, whether it is likely that I should be so mad as to revolt against one, who bears a weapon like this."

This simple answer of the Indian chieftain should put a useful reflection and answer into our minds when tempted by Satan to mortal sin. "Begone!" we should say to him; "how can I be so mad as to revolt against a God who bears such weapons as those of Infinite Justice and Almighty Power?"

## FOURTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

*Eighth Article. The Holy Ghost. His Name. His Divine Nature. His Procession from the Father and the Son. His Descent on the Apostles.*

Q. What is the eighth article of the Creed ?

A. I believe in the Holy Ghost.

So far, my dear children, our instructions on the Creed have all been about the first two Persons of the Blessed Trinity, God the Father and God the Son. We come now, in the eighth article, to speak of the third Person, God the Holy Ghost; *I believe in the Holy Ghost.*

It happens very commonly, I am afraid, that we do not think sufficiently about God the Holy Ghost, and how much we owe to this Divine Spirit, who is the author of all the good that takes place in our souls. We are something like those Jews whom St. Paul found at Ephesus, who called themselves disciples of Christ, but, when he asked them "Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost." \* When St. Paul came to question them, he found that they had only been baptized in the baptism of St. John the Baptist, and that they had never been fully instructed in the doctrine of Jesus Christ. You will perhaps say that *you* are not so ignorant as not to know that there is a Holy Ghost; and, indeed, it would be a shame if you were, since you have received the Baptism, not

\* Acts xix.

of St. John, but of Jesus Christ, and been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But still there are many things, I dare say, which you ought to know about the Holy Ghost, but which you do not ; for example, you do not know, perhaps, of all his Goodness to you, or thank or love him as he deserves. Listen, then, and we will try to learn from this article what the Church teaches us about the Holy Ghost, and about all that he does for our souls.

First of all, you would, no doubt, like to know why it is that we call the third Person of the Blessed Trinity by the name of the *Holy Ghost*. You know why he is called *Holy*, for he is God, and God is Holiness itself. But why is he called the *Holy Ghost*? What is the meaning of the word Ghost? It is an old English word, meaning a spirit ; so, when you speak of a ghost story, you mean the story of some one whose spirit or ghost has appeared after death, as the ghost of the prophet Samuel did to King Saul. Thus, you see, the words *Holy Ghost* only mean Holy Spirit ; so that we use either one or the other name, just as we please, when we speak of the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

You will wonder, perhaps, why we do not give the same name to the first and second Persons of the Blessed Trinity, each of whom, being God, is infinitely Holy, and likewise a pure Spirit ; so that each of them might, with truth, be called the Holy Spirit or the Holy Ghost. The simple reason is this : both the first and second Persons have a name of their own, the one being the Father and the other the Son of God ; but the third Person, being neither Father nor Son, is called by that name which belongs to him by his nature as God, namely, the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit, and so he is usually called in the Sacred Scriptures.

But there is another reason why it is most fitting that the third Person of the Blessed Trinity should be especially called by the name of the *Holy Spirit*. It is because it is He who makes our souls or spirits holy by his grace. It is true that he does not do this separately or apart from the Father and the Son, for God is one, and all the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity do conjointly what each one is said to do; for example, in creating, redeeming, and giving grace to man. But what we mean is this, that, as the creation of the world, which is a work of Power, is ascribed to God the Father, though, in fact, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost created the world along with him,—and as the Redemption of man, which is a wonderful work of Divine Wisdom, is ascribed to God the Son, though the Father and the Holy Ghost co-operated in his becoming man and redeeming us,—so, in like manner, is our Sanctification, or the making our souls holy, ascribed in particular to the Holy Ghost, though the grace of God comes to us, through him, from all the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Thus St. Paul says in one of his epistles, “The charity,” that is, the love, “of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.”\* And you, in one of the beautiful hymns of the Holy Ghost, sing—

Holy Ghost, come down upon thy children;

*Give us grace and make us thine;*

Thy tender fires within us kindle,

Blessed Spirit, Dove Divine.

For all within us good and holy

*Is from thee, thy precious gift.*

Here, you see, the hymn says that everything that is good and holy comes from and is the special gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus, it is the Holy Ghost

\* Rom. v. 5.

who, by his grace, cleanses us from our sins, makes us friends of God, and helps us to overcome temptation and to perform good works.

- But you will say, perhaps, "Do not these graces come to us from the Passion and Death of our Blessed Lord, who died on the cross, that our souls might be raised from the death of sin to the life of Divine grace?" Yes, my dear children, it is quite true that our Blessed Lord has *merited* these graces for us by his sufferings and Death, which are the source or fountain of all grace, but then he *gives* us them by the Holy Ghost. It was for this reason that, when he was about to leave the world, he consoled his disciples by telling them that he would send them the Holy Ghost; and he went on to say that it was for their real good that he should leave them; for the time fixed for the coming of the Holy Ghost, who should apply his merits to their souls, was not till after his own departure. "It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." \*

You also see, from these words of our Blessed Lord, that the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, besides being called the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit is sometimes called the *Paraclete*. This word means Advocate, that is to say, one who speaks or pleads for another. This the Holy Ghost does by assisting us in our prayers, for we can make no prayer that is good for anything or pleasing to God without the grace of the Holy Ghost. Therefore St. Paul says, "No man can say the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost;" † in other words, no man can, unassisted by the Holy Ghost, even pronounce the Holy name of Jesus in a manner that will please Almighty God. But, on the contrary, when the

\* John xvi. 7.    † I. Cor. xii. 3.

Holy Ghost helps us to pray, then our prayers cannot fail to be heard. Wherefore St. Paul says again, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." \* It is for this reason that he is called our *Paraclete* or Advocate.

You see now, how much reason we have to love the Holy Ghost, to thank him for his graces, and to seek his blessing and guidance in all our undertakings. Many good people have the pious practice of saying the prayer of the Holy Ghost, "Come, O Holy Spirit, &c.," at the beginning of every important work or employment; thus, for instance, in Catholic Colleges, the students recite this little prayer whenever they commence their studies. At any rate, we should often pray to the Holy Ghost, for which purpose we might repeat one of the beautiful hymns in his honour, to beg his grace to overcome temptation, keep the commandments, and know and accomplish the Divine Will in all things.

Q. Who is the Holy Ghost?

A. He is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

*The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity:* this is the first thing we have to believe respecting him. Though possessing one and the same Divine nature with the Father and the Son, he is different in Person; in other words, he is not the Father, nor is he the Son, but he is the Spirit of both. How this is, we do not know; it is one of the sublime mysteries of our faith. Before the coming of our Blessed Lord, this mystery was not revealed to mankind as perfectly as it is now. But when Jesus Christ came, he instructed his disciples more fully about the Holy Ghost, and taught them that, though one and the same God, he was different in

\* Rom. viii. 26.

Person from himself and the Father. Hence it was that, at our Lord's baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a Dove,\* showing thereby that the Holy Ghost is distinct in Person from the Divine Son, who was baptized, and from the Father, who spoke by a voice from heaven. Again, when our Lord sent his Apostles to preach to the world, he bade them baptize all nations "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,"† that is to say, in the name of one God and three distinct Persons.

Q. From whom doth He proceed ?

A. From the Father and the Son.

This is the second great truth which the catechism teaches us about the Holy Ghost; *He proceeds from the Father and the Son*. Take notice that we do not say that he is *born or begotten of the Father*, as we do when we speak of the Son of God, but that he *proceeds from both the Father and the Son*. In what mysterious manner this Divine procession takes place, we do not know. All that we know is, that it is a truth which God teaches us, and therefore we submit at once our weak and imperfect reason to the obedience of Divine faith.

Q. Is he equal to them ?

A. Yes ; He is the same Lord and God as they are.

The third truth which we here learn about the Holy Ghost is, that *he is equal in all things to the Father and the Son*. This follows, as a matter of course, from his being the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, for all the three Divine Persons are perfectly equal to each other in Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and every perfection. Hence your catechism says, *He is the same Lord and God as they are*.

\* Matt. iii. 16.

† Matt. xxviii. 19.

Like the Father and the Son, he is the *Lord* or Master of all; and as he possesses, like them, the nature of *God*, he is equally worthy of our adoration, praise, and love.

But perhaps you may think that God the Father and God the Son must have existed before the Holy Ghost, since the Holy Ghost, as you have learnt, proceeds from them. Is this so? No, my dear children, it is not, for there never was a time when the Holy Ghost did not proceed from them. He has proceeded from the Father and the Son from all eternity, in the same way as the Son of God is begotten or born of the Father from all eternity. Neither the Father, the Son, nor the Holy Ghost had any beginning, and therefore it cannot be said that any one of the three Divine Persons is older or younger than the other two.

Q. When did the Holy Ghost come down on the Apostles in fiery tongues?

A. On Whit Sunday.

The fourth truth which we are here taught about the Holy Ghost is, that *he came down on the Apostles, in the form of tongues of fire, upon Whit Sunday*. This coming of the Holy Ghost had been frequently predicted by our Blessed Redeemer. On the night before his cruel Passion, seeing his Apostles plunged in sadness at the thought of his approaching departure, he consoled them by telling them that, as soon as he had returned to his Heavenly Father, he would send upon them the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, who would teach them all truth, and bring all things to their minds whatever he had taught them.\* This promise he repeated to them after his Resurrection; and, when he was on the point of ascending into heaven, he bade them return to Jeru-

\* John xiv. 26, xv. 26, xvi. 13.

saalem, and remain there until the promise should be fulfilled.\* The Apostles, accordingly, during the ten days following our Blessed Lord's Ascension, assembled together in an upper room in the city of Jerusalem, and remained there, occupied in prayer, along with the Blessed Virgin and the holy women, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. At length, upon the tenth day, the Jewish feast of Pentecost, while they were all assembled together, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were, of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.†

This, my dear children, is the account related in the Holy Scripture of the coming down of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles. By this wonderful miracle, they were changed in a moment into new men. Before the Holy Ghost descended upon them, they were timid and cowardly, and had all run away from our Blessed Lord when he was led to execution. Now they were brave and courageous, and not afraid of even torture or death in the service of their Divine Master. Before, they were dull and ignorant, and could not understand many of our Lord's instructions; now, they all of a sudden understood the meaning of his Divine words, and, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, became not only perfectly instructed themselves, but able to teach and instruct others. They received also, at the same time, the gift of miracles, that is, the power of healing the sick, raising the dead to life, and doing other wonderful things which man cannot do of his own natural power. They also received the gift of tongues, by which all who

\* Luke xxiv. 49.

† Acts ii.

heard them speak, of whatever nation they might be, seemed to hear them speak in their own language. It was for this reason, no doubt, that the Holy Ghost came upon them in the form of *tongues* of fire, to show them that, in going out to preach over the world, they should be able to speak to their hearers in every different language, and so enkindle the flames of love in the hearts of all.

Q. Why did He come down upon them?

A. To enable them to preach the Gospel and to plant the Church.

But what was the reason why God gave such great and extraordinary graces to the Apostles, when he sent the Holy Ghost upon them on the feast of Pentecost? It was, as your catechism tells you, *to enable them to preach the Gospel and to plant the Church*. For if they had not been enlightened to know and understand Divine truths, they could not have instructed others; if they had not been made bold and courageous, they durst not have done so; if they had not received the power of working miracles, many would not have believed them; and if they had not had the gift of tongues, a very great number would not have understood them. Thus, you see, God gives us grace, or is ready to give it, if we ask it, in proportion to the need we have of it. Now, as *we* also stand in need of the grace of the Holy Ghost, he has provided for us the Sacrament of Confirmation, in which we may receive this Blessed Spirit. In this Sacrament the Holy Ghost descends into our hearts, as he did into the hearts of the Apostles, to enable us to know, and understand, and firmly hold fast the truths of religion, and to give us grace and courage to profess and practice them. It is true that *we* do not receive the power of working miracles or of speaking in different languages, for

these gifts are nowise necessary, nor were they intended for us. They were given to the Apostles, as they have been at times to Saints in later ages, that the strange and idolatrous nations, to whom they had to preach, might be better able to understand and more easily led to believe them.

#### THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

No sooner had the Holy Ghost filled the souls of the Apostles, than, fired with a holy zeal, they left the upper room, where they had shut themselves up for fear of the Jews, and went out boldly into the streets to preach. "And they began to speak," as the Scripture says, "in divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.

"Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying, 'Behold ! are not all these that speak Galileans ? And how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born ? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians ; we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.' And they were all astonished and wondered, saying to one another, 'what meaneth this ?' But others, mocking, said, 'These men are full of new wine.'

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke to them, 'Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, *It shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh.* Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are far off whomsoever the Lord shall call.'"—*Acts of the Apostles* ii.

## COURAGE OF ST. PETER.

The noble courage displayed by the Apostle St. Peter after he had received the Holy Ghost, is a striking example of the grace which the Holy Spirit gives to those who receive him worthily. You remember that, at the time of our Blessed Lord's Passion, St. Peter had, at the voice of a poor servant-maid, been so struck with terror, that he had thrice denied that he so much as knew his Divine Master. Now he went boldly out into the streets to preach Christ crucified, and openly reproached the Jews for having put to death their long-expected Redeemer. By his first sermon, St. Peter converted no less than three thousand souls, and by the second as many as five thousand. The chief priests and elders of the people, enraged at his success, called him before them, and forbade him to preach any longer the name of Jesus; whereupon he, along with St. John, boldly made answer, "If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye. We cannot but speak the things that we have heard and seen." Cast into prison a second time for preaching the gospel, he was this time cruelly scourged, but went away from the judgment seat with the other Apostles, rejoicing, as the Holy Scripture says, that he was "accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."—*Acts iv., v.*

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FIFTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Ninth Article. The Catholic Church. Jesus Christ the invisible Head of the Church. The Pope, the successor of St. Peter, its visible Head.*

Q. What is the ninth article of the Creed?

A. The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.

We have now gone through the first eight articles of the Creed, all of which relate to one or other of three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. The last four articles, which we are coming to, contain four of the most important truths revealed to us by God.

The most important of all is contained in the ninth article, *The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.*

But why do I say that this truth is more important than any of the others? Because, if we believe in the Holy Catholic Church, we believe in all that she teaches, that is to say, in all the other truths of religion. All that is contained in the other articles of the Creed is, therefore, contained in this single one, *The Holy Catholic Church.*

There is another reason, my dear children, why this article comes in that place in the Creed which it occupies, immediately after the eighth article, which treats of the Holy Ghost. It is because the Church of Christ is the special work of the Holy Spirit. You remember that our Blessed Lord, while he was yet on earth, ordained his Apostles priests, and bade them go and baptize all nations, teaching them all that he had taught to them.\* But they were not to begin their great mission until after the coming of the Holy Ghost; wherefore he told them to return to Jerusalem after he had ascended, and remain there until they should be "endued with power from on high."† On the feast of Pentecost, this promise was fulfilled. The Holy Ghost came down upon them, enlightening their minds with a wonderful knowledge of heavenly things, inflaming their hearts with a holy zeal, and bestowing upon them those miraculous powers which they required in order to prove to their hearers that they were sent by God. From that day the Old or Jewish Law was done away with, and the New Law, the teaching of Jesus Christ, of which the Jewish Law had been only a figure, remained in its place.

No sooner had they received the Divine Spirit, than the Apostles went forth from that upper room to

\* Matt. xxviii. 19.

† Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4.

begin their mission. The first sermon was preached on that very day by St. Peter in the streets of Jerusalem, and three thousand souls were converted to Jesus Christ. From Jerusalem the Apostles soon carried the Divine word to the other cities of Judea, and from thence to the principal countries of the then known world. Wherever they went they converted thousands, both Jews and pagans, and baptized them, according to our Lord's instructions, in the name of the Blessed Trinity. But the Apostles could not remain always with their new converts to complete their instruction and administer the Sacraments; there were other cities and other nations to which the Gospel had not yet been preached. Besides, there were future generations to be provided for, millions yet unborn when the Apostles went to receive their crown. What, then, did the Apostles do, that their great work might not die with them? Following the instructions which our Lord had given them, they ordained, wherever they went, Bishops and Priests to take charge of the newly converted flocks, instruct them more fully, and administer to them the Holy Sacraments. Thus were numerous Christian congregations formed over the whole world, all of whom were united in believing what the Apostles had taught them, and in worshipping God in the manner in which they had instructed them.

You will now better understand the meaning of the answer to the next question, which, at a time when there are so many false religions set up in the world, is one of the greatest importance.

Q. What is the Catholic Church?

A. The union of all the faithful under one head.

The Catholic Church is the *union*, or assembly, of *all the faithful*, that is, of all those who profess the true faith, *under one head*. From this you see that

those do not belong to the Catholic Church who deny her doctrines or do not acknowledge her head. Infidels, therefore, that is, unbelievers, heretics who call in question the teaching of the Church, and schismatics who refuse obedience to her head, are not members of the Church at all.

You will perhaps ask me whether those are members of the Church who believe what she teaches and acknowledge her head, but who lead wicked and irreligious lives. Yes, my dear children, they are members of the Church upon earth; but they will never be members of the Church in heaven, unless they sincerely repent. For the Church on earth consists of all who are baptized and believe, whether good or bad; wherefore our Blessed Lord compares her to "a net cast into the sea and gathering together of all kinds of fishes." \* But at the day of general judgment, the Angels will go forth, and will separate the good from the bad, and the good only shall be gathered into the kingdom of heaven.

The Apostle St. Paul beautifully compares the Catholic Church to the human body, which is composed of many different senses and members, each having its own separate office, but all closely united under one head, which rules and directs them all.† Thus, the feet carry the body from place to place, the eyes keep watch to preserve it from danger, the hands do their part in providing for its wants, while the head thinks for and directs the whole. So is it, my dear children, in the Church of Christ. There are many members, or persons who compose it, but all have not the same duty or office. There are those who have to teach and those who have to learn, those who have to give the Sacraments and those who have to receive them, those who have to rule and those who have to obey. In other words, there

\* Matt. xiii. 47.

† Ephes. iv. 15, 16, v. 23.

are the pastors of the Church, that is, the Bishops and Priests, and there are the simple faithful. Each of these two classes have their own separate office, but both are united in believing the same doctrines and acknowledging the same head. Tell me, now,

Q. Who is that head ?

A. Christ Jesus our Lord.

Yes ; *our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the head of the Catholic Church.* It was He who founded it, and it is He who governs and preserves it. Before he founded the Catholic Church, it was the Jewish Church or Synagogue which taught mankind what they had to believe and do in order to gain heaven. This Church, too, was founded by God, and had God for its head ; but it was only a figure of and to prepare the way for the Catholic Church, which our Lord was to establish, and which was to continue to teach mankind until the end of time. Of this Church Jesus Christ is the head.

It was not, however, the Will of God that his Divine Son should always remain *visibly* among men, that is to say, in the sight of mankind. He had to ascend to his Heavenly Father, there to sit at the right hand of God, no longer visible to man, till he should come at the last day to judge the world. That his disciples, therefore, might have some one to whom they could have recourse, and from whom they could learn his Will, he chose out of his twelve Apostles one, whom he made their chief, and to whom he gave power to govern his Church and exercise his authority till he should come again. But this is explained to you more fully in the two next answers of the Catechism, which I will now ask you.

Q. Has not the Church a visible head on earth?

A. Yes; the Bishop of Rome, who is the Vicar of Christ.

Q. Why is the Bishop of Rome the head of the Church?

A. Because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to be the head of the Church.

From these answers, my dear children, you learn two important truths; first, that it is the holy Apostle *St. Peter*, whom Christ appointed to be the head of the Church; and, secondly, that it is the *Bishop of Rome*, who succeeds to St. Peter, who now rules the Church in his place. For St. Peter was the first Bishop of Rome; there he governed the Church, and there he suffered martyrdom for the love of Jesus Christ. But though St. Peter is dead, he still lives in the person of his successor, who, in succeeding to the Bishopric of St. Peter, succeeds also to his power and authority. The Bishop of Rome is, therefore, like St. Peter, the visible head of the Catholic Church, being also, like him, *the Vicar of Christ*, that is to say, ruling the Church in the name of our Blessed Lord and by virtue of his authority. For this is the meaning of the word *vicar*, one who acts in the place or name of another. Thus, in every diocese there is some priest who acts in the place and name of the Bishop in certain things which the Bishop puts under his charge, and he is hence called the Bishop's vicar, or the vicar of the diocese. In this diocese the Very Rev. — is the vicar, as he has been appointed by the Right Rev. —, our Bishop, to act in his name. Every one, therefore, is bound to obey the Very Rev. — the same as the Bishop, because he acts in his place and by his authority. Just in the same way, we are bound to obey the Bishop of Rome as we would obey our Blessed Lord himself, because the Bishop of Rome is appointed by our Lord as His Vicar to govern His Church upon earth.

Q. How do you prove that Christ appointed St. Peter to be the head of the Church?

A. Because He said to him: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* xvi. 18, 19.

These words, my dear children, were spoken by our Blessed Lord to St. Peter, and were the reward of the glorious profession of faith made by that great Apostle. For our Blessed Redeemer, having one day asked his disciples whom men commonly considered him to be, they answered that some said that he was St. John the Baptist come to life again, and others that he was Elias, who had been taken up alive to heaven in a fiery chariot, and others that he was a prophet sent by God. Whereupon he asked them what they themselves said. Upon which St. Peter, speaking for the rest, replied,

"Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

Our Blessed Lord to this made answer,

"And I say to thee,

"*Thou art Peter,*

"*And upon this rock I will build my Church,*

"*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;*

"*And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*

"And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

From these memorable words you see, first of all, that our Blessed Lord gave a new name to St. Peter, whose proper name was Simon Barjona, that is, Simon the Son of John. Our Lord had before declared that he should be called by the name of Peter, for when that Apostle first came to him, brought by his brother Andrew, he said to him,

“Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted, Peter.”\* For Cephas and Peter are one and the same thing, the one being the Chaldaic and the other the Greek word for *rock*. This name was given to St. Peter on account of his strong faith, and because our Blessed Lord had destined him to be the firm foundation of his Church. Wherefore, having now repeated and confirmed his name—*I say to thee, thou art Peter*—Christ immediately added, *And upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* St. Peter, then, is, as we see, the firm foundation on which is built the Church of Christ, against which the gates, that is, all the power, of hell will never be able to prevail.

But St. Peter was not only in the designs of God to be the *foundation* of the Church, he was also to be the *head* and ruler of it. This our Blessed Lord showed clearly in the sentence which follows, *And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* For who is it who has a right to have in his keeping the keys of a house, or those of a town or castle? Is it not the master of the house and the governor or ruler of the city or fortress? Hence it has always been the custom in war, when a city is surrendered or given up to the enemy, for the leaders of the vanquished party to present the conqueror with the keys of the place, to signify thereby that he is now the master or ruler of it. St. Peter, therefore, is the master, ruler, or governor, that is, in other words, the head of the Church, since he has received the keys of it from our Blessed Lord; for, notice, it is the Church which is here called, as in many other places of Holy Scripture, “the kingdom of heaven.”

It is not sufficient, however, for the master of a house, the governor of a castle, or the ruler of a

\* John i. 42.

state to have simply the *title* of authority ; he must also have *power* to rule and govern, to make laws and to change them, to give orders and to enforce them. Wherefore our Blessed Lord gave this power also, as well as the title, to St. Peter, "*And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*" And later on our Blessed Lord said to St. Peter, "Feed my lambs. Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep,"\* to show that he gave him power to rule *all* the faithful, priests as well as people.

These, my dear children, are the magnificent promises which Jesus Christ made to the Apostle St. Peter, and which have been handed down by him to each of his successors. The Bishop of Rome, therefore, governs the Church of God by virtue of that power and authority which Christ gave to St. Peter. Like him he feeds the lambs and sheep of Christ, being, as St. Peter was, the universal shepherd of the flock ; and every one, therefore, owes to him a ready and entire obedience. Of him it is equally true, that whatsoever he binds upon earth is bound by Jesus Christ in heaven, and whatsoever he looses here below is loosed also in heaven by our Blessed Lord. He, too, is, like St. Peter, to whom he succeeds, as a firm rock, against which all the storms and efforts of wicked men shall never prevail ; and the Church, which is built on this rock, continues firm and unshaken, notwithstanding all the attacks it has had to sustain during eighteen hundred years from the malice of the devil, the fury of persecutors, the artifices of heretics, and the hatred of unbelievers.

Q. What is the Bishop of Rome called ?

A. He is called the Pope, which word signifies Father.

\* John xxi. 15—17.

Q. Is, then, the Pope our spiritual Father ?

A. Yes ; he is the spiritual Father of all the Faithful ?

The name which is given to the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter and visible head of the Church, is a very suitable one. It is that of *Pope* or Father, for the word Pope is only a Latin word meaning Father. For this reason, in one country, Russia, the priests themselves are called popes, because the people look on them as their spiritual fathers. But throughout the rest of the Christian world, though the name of father is usually given to priests, that of Pope is given only to the Bishop of Rome, because he is the *universal* father, that is, the father of Bishops and Priests as well as of people.

When we speak of any particular Pope, we put the name, which he took on becoming Pope, after the title ; for example, Pope Gregory the Great, Pope Benedict XIV., or our own beloved Pope Pius IX. For, as our Blessed Lord, in making St. Peter the head of his Church, changed his name from Simon into Peter, so do the successors of St. Peter, in succeeding to his sacred office, take a new name, by which they are henceforth called. It generally happens that this name is the same as that of some of the holy Popes who have gone before them. Thus, for example, there have been eight Popes before the present one who have been called by the name of Pius, all of whom have been distinguished for their virtue and piety. Hence the present Pope is not called simply Pope Pius, but Pope Pius IX.

If any of you have studied geography, you will have perhaps seen upon the map of Italy a small province called the States of the Church, the capital of which is the city of Rome. Of this country the Pope is the king, so that you see he is a *temporal* ruler as well as a *spiritual* one, being king of his own little kingdom as well as the spiritual head of the whole

Catholic world. You will perhaps like to know how it was that the Pope became a king. I will tell you. When the great Roman Empire, which had so persecuted the Church, fell to pieces through the invasion of the Northern barbarians, the people of Rome and the neighbouring provinces chose the Pope as their ruler, he being the only one who had watched with a fatherly care over their safety, and frequently exposed his own life to protect them from the invaders. In later times a fresh tract of country was added to the Pope's little kingdom by the pious Pepin, king of France and Germany. It is thus, my dear children, that Almighty God has provided for the free government of his Church, by making its Head independent of any earthly monarch. Wicked and rapacious kings, like our own Henry VIII., would often have persecuted the Pope and interfered with the exercise of his spiritual power, had the Pope been their subject, instead of being, as he is, a free and independent monarch.

I need hardly tell you that it is the mark of a good Catholic to reverence the Pope, to love the Pope, to pray often for the Pope, and to render him exact obedience in all that he commands. For is he not the head of the Church, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and our own spiritual father? Besides, our holy father the Pope loves us all tenderly; and though he does not know us all by name, yet he thinks of us all, prays for us all, asks after us from our Bishops, sends us his blessing, and sometimes writes us letters, which are read in all the churches, and are called "encyclical letters." Whenever, therefore, you hear Mass or go to Holy Communion, be sure to say a little prayer for the Pope, asking God to give him light and grace to govern the Church wisely, and patience to bear his many trials, for the life of the Pope has always been, from the days of St. Peter, a life of severe trial and suffering.

## THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.

It is to the zeal and piety of Pope Gregory the Great that England owes its conversion from idolatry and superstition to the faith of Jesus Christ. Our first forefathers the Britons had already been converted to the Christian religion by missionaries sent from Rome by Pope Lucius, about 180 years after Christ. But a new race of barbarians, from the shores of the Baltic Sea, had invaded England, and driven the former inhabitants, the Britons, into the mountains of Wales and the Western counties. The savage conquerors, who were called Saxons and Angles, were as yet idolators, and wherever they came they destroyed every vestige of Christianity from the face of the land. It chanced, however, that some of their own youths were taken prisoners, sold as slaves, and found their way into the market-place of Rome. A Benedictine monk, named Gregory, who was passing by at the time, stopped to gaze on them, and was moved with admiration on beholding their fair and noble countenances and beautiful auburn hair, which formed so strong a contrast to the swarthy features and raven locks of his own countrymen. Touched with pity at their sad fate, he asked of what race they were and whence they came. "They are Angles," was the reply, "from the isle of Britain." "Angels you should have said, not Angles, were they only Christians," replied Gregory. "Alas, how sad it is that a nation of such promise and of form so fair should still be buried in the darkness of idolatry, and lie under the anger of God!" So saying, he returned disconsolate to his monastery, whence he soon issued to go and cast himself at the feet of the Pope, begging to be allowed to preach the gospel to his beloved Angles. Having obtained permission, he set out with great joy on his distant journey, but was pursued and brought back by the people of Rome, who were unwilling that a Priest of such singular piety and zeal should be lost to their own city. The Pope dying soon after, the monk Gregory was raised to the chair of St. Peter, and one of his first cares was to choose out a band of zealous missionaries to undertake the work, which he had been so anxious to accomplish in person. The little band was placed by St. Gregory under the direction of St. Augustine, who was a monk of the same monastery to which he himself had belonged.

St. Augustine and his companions, having arrived in England, met with a favourable reception from Ethelbert, King of Kent, who gave them full leave to preach in his dominions, and was himself soon after converted along with all his subjects.

From Kent the light of the gospel spread over the rest of England, for Almighty God blessed the labours of the devoted missionaries and confirmed their preaching by numerous miracles. St. Augustine, by the advice of St. Gregory, fixed his see in the city of Canterbury, of which he became the first Archbishop. He is called the Apostle of England, because he brought us the light of the true faith ; but while we love and reverence him as such, let us never forget that we owe both him and his devoted band of companions to the zeal and fatherly love of that holy Pontiff St. Gregory the Great.

#### ST. LEO THE GREAT AND ATILA.

About the middle of the fifth century, a horde of fierce barbarians, named Huns, led by the terrible Attila, surnamed the scourge of God, swept over the Roman Empire, destroying everything before them, and covering the whole country with smoking ruins and the dead bodies of the slaughtered inhabitants. Flushed with victory, the savage conquerors at length advanced towards Rome, which the Roman emperors, whose armies had been everywhere defeated, had left without garrison or means of defence. In the midst of the general consternation, the holy Pontiff Pope Leo the Great, alone ventured to go to meet the conqueror. Having arrived at the camp of the Huns on the banks of the river Mincio, Leo was admitted into the presence of Attila, and spoke to him with such courage and firmness of the account which he must one day give to Almighty God of his actions, that the savage barbarian at once granted St. Leo all that he asked, promising to withdraw his army and leave Rome unmolested.

It is related that the followers of Attila, astonished at the respect which their terrible chieftain had paid to a Christian Priest, asked him, after St. Leo's departure, what was the reason of his unusual conduct. "It was not," said he, "the person of my visitor alone which made such an impression upon me. I saw near the Pontiff a figure far more august, venerable by his white hair, and clad in priestly robes, who held a drawn sword in his hand, and seemed to threaten me by his looks and gestures of terrible meaning if I had not undertaken faithfully to execute all that had been demanded by his envoy."—*Butler's Lives of the Saints.*

## SIXTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Ninth Article—Continued. The Church. Her four Marks.*

Q. Has the Church of Christ any marks by which we may know her?

A. Yes; she has these four marks: she is One—she is Holy—she is Catholic—she is Apostolic.

The Church of Christ is, my dear children, as our Blessed Lord said, like a city seated on a mountain, which cannot be hid.\* In other words, she is plain and visible to all; none can possibly mistake her, who are not wilfully blind to the truth. And with reason has our loving Saviour made it so, since he wishes all to be saved. He would not, therefore, have any one to be ignorant of the one only way which leads to eternal life.

It is for this reason that our Blessed Lord has given his Church four plain marks, by which any one may know that she is the Church which he has established to teach mankind the way to heaven. And what are these marks? They are these four: *she is One—she is Holy—she is Catholic—she is Apostolic.* These four marks are frequently spoken of in the Holy Scriptures, and no one who believes in the sacred writings can possibly deny that the religion or Church founded by Jesus Christ must have these four marks. It follows, therefore, that

\* Matt. v. 14.

any religion which has not got these four marks, is a false religion, the work of man, and not the Church established by our Blessed Lord.

The Catechism now goes on to explain these marks one by one. Listen attentively, and you will very easily see how it is the Catholic Church alone, among all religions, which possesses these four marks; and how there is not a single one of these marks to which any of the sects or false religions, which you see about you, can establish a claim. If you are well instructed on this important point, my dear children, you may perhaps, one day or other, be, under God, the happy means of pointing out to some poor wandering soul the one only road which leads to the kingdom of heaven.

Q. How is the Church One ?

A. Because all her members agree in one faith, have all the same sacraments and sacrifice, and are all under one head.

The Church is One. This is the first mark or sign whereby all men may know which is the Church founded by Jesus Christ. For our Blessed Lord did not make *two* religions, but *one*; he did not teach *two* faiths, but *one*; he did not say that there are *two* roads to heaven, but expressly declared that there is only *one*; "Narrow is *the* gate and straight is *the* way that leadeth to life."\* And on another occasion our Lord said, "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold; them, also, I must bring; and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be *one fold and one shepherd*."† For the same reason, the Apostle St. Paul said, "One Lord, one faith, one Baptism."‡

Now look at the Catholic Church, to which you, my dear children, have the happiness to belong, and see how perfectly she possesses this mark. She is

\* Matt. vii. 14.

† John x. 16.

‡ Eph. iv. 5.

One in *doctrine*, for all her members agree in one faith ;

One in *worship*, for they have all the same sacraments and sacrifice ;

One in her *head*, for they all are subject to and acknowledge one head.

First of all, she is One in *doctrine*, that is to say, in her faith or belief. For there is no difference or disagreement among Catholics about matters of faith, no disputing or wrangling about what is God's truth; every Catholic in the world believes the same, because every one believes whatever the Church teaches. The simplest child believes exactly the same as the most learned Bishop, the king or emperor the same as the poorest of his subjects, the converted negro the same as the civilized European. But how different is it with the false religions which we see around us, and which, though they all join with one another in attacking the Catholic Church, differ most widely from each other in what they profess to believe ; and not only so, but hardly two of their ministers can be found to agree with one another on doctrines of the utmost importance. Thus, in the Protestant church of England, for example, there have been disputes of late years as to whether Baptism is necessary for Salvation ; whether Communion, or the Lord's Supper, as it is called by Protestants, really contains the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ ; and even as to whether the whole of the Sacred Scripture is the inspired word of God. In these and other disputes of equal importance, the most learned of the Protestant clergy, and their very Bishops, have been found to take opposite sides. \*

Secondly, the Catholic Church is One in her *worship*. For, go where you will, you will find among

\* See the Gorham Discussion, the Tracts for the Times, the Colenso Dispute, &c.

Catholics the same seven Sacraments and the same Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which are the most sacred and necessary parts of religious worship. Hence it is that a Catholic is at home in whatever part of the world he may be. Whether he be in England or in Italy, in America or in China, in Africa or in Australia, it is all the same. Let him enter into a Catholic church or chapel and he there beholds the same ceremonies, the same sacred rites, to which he has been accustomed from his infancy in his own land. The Priest is at the altar, clad in the sacred vestments, offering up the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, and the words that he utters fall familiarly on the stranger's ear, for they are the selfsame which he has so often heard, and perhaps answered to, when, as a child, he learnt to serve Mass and minister at the altar of God. Or perhaps he sees the Priest sitting in the confessional hearing the confessions of the crowds who flock about him, or administering the Holy Communion at the altar rails. Yes, my dear children, it makes a thrill run through your heart when, in a distant land, amid strangers speaking an unknown tongue, you discover, on entering the Catholic Church, that you have brothers even there, children, like yourselves, of the Holy Catholic Church, worshippers at the same altar, frequenters of the same Sacraments, partakers of the same Life-giving Food, the Bread of Angels, the Holy Communion. How different from the empty forms of Protestant worship, which differ in every country according to the particular sect which happens to prevail!

The third way in which the Church is One is in her head. All the members of the Church acknowledge one head, Jesus Christ, and his Vicar or representative upon earth, the Bishop of Rome. What beautiful order and harmony reign in the Catholic

Church ! The people are subject to the Priests, the Priests to the Bishops, the Bishops to the Pope, and the Pope to Jesus Christ, in whose name he governs the Church. It is just the same as in the human body, your body, I mean, which is made of flesh and blood. It has many limbs or members, for example, the hands, the arms, the feet, &c. ; but it has only one head, which directs or governs the whole body. It would be strange, indeed, if a man were to be born with two heads. One might want the feet to move in this direction, the other in an opposite way; one might want the hand to write a letter, the other to weed the garden, and the poor hands and feet would not know which to obey. Hence there would be a thousand quarrels, contentions, and disputes. And so it would be in the Church of God, if there were not one head to rule all, to direct all, and to settle all disputes. It is for this reason that Protestants differ so much among themselves as to what to believe, and continually split into so many new sects, because they have no common ruler or head to settle all their differences. And if they do acknowledge a head at all, they acknowledge different ones in different countries ; and, what is the strangest of all, they make kings and queens the heads of their religions. Thus, Protestants in England acknowledge Queen Victoria the head of their church, and Protestants in Prussia the King of Prussia ; and they appeal to them in their religious disputes as if the King or the Queen were sure to know what Christ taught or what he did not teach. But we, my dear children, have for our visible head the successor of him on whom Christ built his Church, and to whom he gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with power to bind and loose.

“ I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall

not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." \*

Q. How is the Church holy?

A. Because she teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children.

The second mark of the Catholic Church, being the true Church of Christ, is, that she is Holy. For it is plain that the Church which was established by our Blessed Lord must be Holy, since it was founded by Jesus Christ himself, the God of all Holiness, since He is also the head of it, and since it was established by him as a means of making men good and bringing them to heaven. Now, the Catholic Church, my dear children, fulfils this mark; she is Holy as well as One. This does not mean, however, that all Catholics are Holy (would that they were!), but that if they are not, it is their own fault, since the Church teaches them how to be holy, and supplies them with the means of becoming holy. Many neglect these means, it is true, but many also make good use of them, and become very holy and pleasing to Almighty God. Hence the catechism says that the Church is Holy in three ways:

*First.*—In her *doctrine* or teaching.

*Secondly.*—In the *means of holiness* which she supplies.

*Thirdly.*—In the *eminent holiness of many of her children.*

*First of all.*—Your catechism tells you that the Church *teaches a holy doctrine*, that is to say, she teaches a doctrine which would be sure to make you

\* Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

good and holy if you would follow it. Thus, she teaches you not to curse or swear, not to quarrel or fight, not to tell lies, not to steal, and to pay back if you have stolen. She reminds you continually of death, which will come quickly upon you, of the strict judgment which will follow, of hell, where the wicked will be punished, and of heaven, where the good will be rewarded. She puts before you the example of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, obedient to Mary and Joseph, meek and gentle towards his enemies, patient under the most cruel torments, and dying out of pure charity to redeem mankind. She teaches you that if you are obedient, gentle, and patient, after the example of our Blessed Lord; if you love God and keep his Divine commandments, Almighty God will reward with a special recompense every good act which you perform. Such teaching, my dear children, cannot fail to make a man good and holy if he follows it. On the contrary, the Protestant doctrine, that good works have no merit in the sight of God; or the teaching of some of their first leaders, that some men are born to be saved and others to be damned, is not likely to make any one good, but rather the contrary.

*Secondly.*—The Church is Holy, because she not only teaches us to be holy, but supplies us with *the means* of becoming so. These means are prayer and the Sacraments, by which we obtain the grace of God, without which no one can become good or holy. Thus, when we are born, we are stained with the sin which our first parents committed in the garden of Paradise; but this is washed away by the Sacrament of Baptism, which we receive soon after our birth. Then, when we are grown up and fall into sin ourselves, it is forgiven us by the Sacrament of Penance, if we be truly sorry and firmly resolve to avoid sin for the future. We receive also the

Holy Ghost, in the Sacrament of Confirmation, to strengthen us and help us to continue good ; and we receive the very source or fountain of all holiness in the Holy Communion, which is the Body and Blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Then again there is prayer, which, when it is well said, always obtains for us help from God: and finally there is that abundant means of grace, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is these graces and helps, which our Blessed Lord gave to his Church, and gives through his Church to us, which enable us to become good and holy. So that you see that it is their own fault if Catholics do not all become good, since they have so many means of holiness in the Church, if they will only make good use of them.

*Thirdly.*—The Church is Holy, because *she is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children.* Eminent means great, so, when we speak of any great man, we often say he is a very eminent man. Now, there are very many persons in the Church of Christ, men and women, grown-up persons and children, too, who, by following the holy teaching of the Church and making good use of the means of holiness which she offers, have arrived at very great or eminent holiness. How many thousands of holy martyrs have generously suffered all kinds of torments, and allowed themselves to be put to a most cruel death, sooner than renounce their faith and the duty which they owed to God ! How many thousands of holy Bishops and Priests have devoted themselves to preach the Gospel to the poor, visit the sick and the dying, and labour in every way for the good of souls, willing to spend their own lives in the midst of sufferings and privations, so that they could but promote the glory of God and the salvation of their fellow-men ! And again, how many thousands of holy monks and nuns,

many of them born of royal or noble families, have left home, riches, friends, and families, in order to enter into some religious order, where they might spend their lives in teaching and relieving the poor, comforting the sick and the suffering, and praying for the conversion of sinners! And again, how many in every station of life, soldiers, tradesmen, servants, labourers, and mechanics, have led most holy lives in the midst of the world, edifying every one by their virtues, and are now gone to heaven to receive their reward! Some of these, who are declared by the Church to have lived in great holiness and died in the grace of God, are called Saints, for Saint means holy; but there are many Saints in heaven, whose names we do not know and whose lives we have never heard of. Let us, my dear children, by a good and virtuous life, try to be among that happy number, that so we may share in their eternal reward. Thus shall we, too, give glory to God and honour to his Church, for the holiness of her children is the glory of the Church; while, on the contrary, the bad lives of many Catholics who disobey her teaching and abuse her graces, are frequently made, though unjustly, a reproach against the faith which they profess, and the Church to which, in name only, they belong.

## PARABLE OF THE COCKLE.

"The kingdom of heaven," said our Blessed Lord, "is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But, while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade had sprung up and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle.

"And the servants of the good man of the house coming, said to him, *Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence, then, hath it cockle?* And he said to them, *An enemy hath done this.* And the servants said to him, *Wilt thou that we go and gather it up?* And he said, *No; lest, perhaps, gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also*

*together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, 'Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.'*

*"Then, having sent away the multitude, he came into the house, and his disciples came to him, saying, Expound to us the parable of the cockle of the field. Who made answer and said to them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom. And the cockle are the children of the wicked one. And the enemy that sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the angels."—Matt. xiii.*

Q. What means the word Catholic ?

A. The word Catholic means Universal.

Q. How is the Church Catholic or Universal ?

A. Because she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, and maintains all truths.

The third mark of the true Church is, that she is Catholic or Universal. For our Blessed Lord did not come from heaven to save the people of his own time only or the people of a particular country, but *all men*, in whatever age they might live or in whatever country they might dwell. Now the Catholic Church is the only one which has existed in all ages and preached to all nations, and therefore she is the only one which can justly lay claim to the glorious title of Catholic or Universal.

*First of all.*—She is Universal as to *time*, or, in other words, *she subsists in all ages*. Eighteen hundred years have passed away, my dear children, since our Blessed Lord first founded and established the Catholic Church, and during all this time she has continued her glorious mission of saving souls and leading them to heaven. Fifteen hundred years had passed away before any of the different sects which we see about us had any name or existence, and each of them can go back only one or two, or at most three hundred and fifty years to the time when its founder first rebelled against the teaching of the

Catholic Church. Thus, the Protestants go back to Luther and Calvin, who first began their religion a little more than three hundred years ago; the Presbyterians to John Knox, who lived a hundred years later; the Methodists to John Wesley, who died only a hundred years since. But the Catholic Church goes back eighteen hundred years to Jesus Christ, her Divine founder, having with her the security of his Divine promise that she shall never fail, but that He himself will remain with her to the end of time.

*Secondly.*—The Catholic Church is Universal as to *place*; she *teaches all nations*. Before our Blessed Lord ascended into heaven, he bade his disciples go out into the world, and teach all nations what he had taught to them. In obedience to his Divine commandment, they went forth and preached the Gospel to the Greeks, the Romans, and many pagan nations. The Bishops and Priests who came after them continued their work, visiting and converting those countries to which the Apostles in their lifetime had not been able to preach. Thus it was that the Popes, who succeeded in regular order to St. Peter, sent St. Augustine and his companions to convert England, St. Patrick to convert Ireland, St. Boniface to convert Germany, and St. Francis Xavier to convert the East Indies. There is not, indeed, a country in the world where the Catholic missionaries have not penetrated, nor a soil which has not been watered with the blood of Catholic martyrs. And go where you will, my dear children, among the mountains of Asia, the back woods of America, the sandy plains of Africa, or the distant isles of the Southern Ocean, there is not a country, nor a province, where you will not find fellow Catholics, fellow-worshippers with you at the same altar, fellow-children of the same Universal Church. On the contrary, other

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religions are confined mostly to one or two countries, and number very few followers compared with the mighty number of Catholics. For by far the greater portion of those who believe in Jesus Christ, that is to say, of Christians throughout the world, belong to the Catholic Church. In this country, unhappily, owing to the cruelties which were practised by Henry VIII., Queen Elizabeth, and the succeeding monarchs in plundering, persecuting, and putting Catholics to death, it happens that Catholics are fewer in number than Protestants; but in other countries it is not so. Spain and Portugal are all Catholic, Italy is Catholic, France and Belgium are Catholic; so is the greater portion of Austria. South America is almost all Catholic; and in every country where the Christian religion is persecuted, as in China, Cochin China, and Japan, whatever Christians there are, with very few exceptions belong to the Catholic Church. In fact, if you take the entire world, and number all those who go by the name of Christians, you will find that, while the number of your fellow Catholics amounts to no less than 250 millions, all the different sects of Protestantism united, that is to say, English Protestants, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, &c., all joined together, do not amount to more than 50 millions. That is to say, there are five Catholics for every Protestant of any sect, thirty-six Catholics for every Protestant of what is called the Church of England, sixty-five Catholics for every Presbyterian, and so of the rest.\*

You see, then, how justly the name of Catholic, or Universal, is given to the Church to which you have the happiness of belonging, and how little claim any other religion can show to this title.

\* *Scientific Miscellany*: a Protestant publication, quoted by the Rev. S. Keenan in his *Controversial Catechism*.

*In the third place.*—The Church is Catholic, because, as your catechism says, she *maintains all truths*, that is to say, because she continues to teach, whole and entire, all the truths which our Blessed Lord came down from heaven to teach. All other religions which have separated from the Catholic Church have thrown away some part or other of the Divine teaching. Thus Luther, the leader of the Protestants, first denied the authority of the Pope, then the doctrine of Indulgences, then five of the Sacraments, then the Mass, and then called in question portions of the Holy Scriptures. Calvin, following in his steps, denied the real presence of our Lord in the Holy Communion, the right of Bishops to rule in the Church, and many other doctrines. After him came the Anabaptists, who forbid the use of infant Baptism; the Quakers, who would have no Baptism at all; and the Unitarians, who blasphemously deny that there are three distinct Persons in the Blessed Trinity. But while these false religions deny bit by bit every portion of our Blessed Lord's teaching, the Catholic Church preserves it whole and entire; no one of her children can deny the smallest part of it, without at that very moment ceasing to be a Catholic. And hence it is that those who have fallen away from the true Church since the so-called Reformation, are known by the name of Protestants, because they protest against some portion of Catholic doctrine. On the contrary, the name of Catholic has for eighteen hundred years been the peculiar title of our Church, a name to which, you see, she may well lay claim, since she is Universal as to *time*, as to *place*, and as to *doctrine*.

#### THE NAME OF CATHOLIC.

The great St. Augustine, writing against the Manichees, to whose sect he had in his youth belonged, says, that, among

other motives, which kept him in the Catholic Church, was the very name of *Catholic*, which is so peculiar to her, that heretics, with all their efforts, have never been able to rob her of that glorious title. "For though they all," says the holy Doctor, "lay claim to the name and title of Catholic, yet there is not one among them who is called by that name, nor is there a heretic who, if you met him in the street and asked him where was the Catholic church, would dare to direct you to his own schismatical assembly."—*St. Augustine, Lib. contra Ep. Fundamenti. c. 5.*

How true are these words, written by St. Augustine 1400 years ago, of the Catholic Church and the heretics of the present day !

Q. How is the Church Apostolic ?

A. Because in her pastors she comes down by a continual succession from the Apostles of Christ, and has her doctrine, her orders, and her mission from them.

The fourth mark of the true Church is, that she is Apostolic. This follows, my dear children, from her being the Church of Christ ; for if she be the Church founded by Jesus Christ, she must be the Church of the Apostles also, since our Blessed Lord made them the first Bishops and Priests of his Church. Now, the Catholic Church, and she alone, possesses this mark.

In the first place, the Catholic Church is shown to be the Church of the Apostles by the regular or *continual succession of her pastors*, that is, of her Bishops and Priests, *from the time and persons of the Apostles*. For the Apostles, being mortal men, could not continue longer than their lifetime the sacred office conferred upon them by their Divine Master. They therefore, wherever they went, ordained Bishops and Priests to continue their work, and these again in their turn ordained others, and so on in regular succession to our own time. Thus every one of our own Bishops and Priests is the direct descendant of one or other of the Apostles. But if you wish to see

more clearly how the Catholic Church goes back in her pastors to the time of the Apostles, look at the long unbroken line of Bishops of Rome who have ruled the Church from the time of St. Peter down to his present Holiness Pope Pius the Ninth. We know all their names, their histories, the years when they began to reign, the years when they died or suffered martyrdom for the faith, and we can trace them back in one continued line of succession to St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles.

In the second place, the Church is Apostolic, not only because her pastors come down in an unbroken line of succession from the Apostles, but because they have received from them the same *doctrine*, the same sacred *orders*, the same Divine *mission*, which the Apostles received from Jesus Christ himself. For the *doctrine* which our Bishops and Priests teach us is not their own doctrine, but the doctrine of the Church, which has continued one and the same since the time of the Apostles, who themselves received it from our blessed Lord. In like manner, the sacred *orders* by which our Bishops and Priests are set apart to offer the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to preach and baptize, to forgive sins, and administer the Holy Sacraments, are the self-same which our Blessed Lord bestowed upon his Apostles when he ordained them Priests, and which they have handed down in regular succession to our present pastors. And, finally, they enjoy the same Divine *Mission* as the Apostles did, since they are sent by the Apostles and their successors, as the Apostles were sent by Jesus Christ, to preach to mankind and guide them to eternal life. "As the Father hath sent me," said our Blessed Lord to his Apostles, "I also send you. Going, therefore, teach all nations."\* From this we see that our Blessed Lord did not merely ordain his

\* John xx. 21; Matt. xxviii. 19.

Apostles Priests, but that he gave them a mission, that is to say, that he *sent them out* into the world to exercise their sacred functions. In the same manner does the Pope, the successor of St. Peter and the Vicar of Jesus Christ, give to each newly ordained Priest, through his own Bishop, a mission, by sending him to some particular place to labour for the salvation of souls.

#### THE BENIGHTED TRAVELLER.

A traveller returning to his home from a distant country arrived at nightfall at the entrance of a vast forest. Being unable either to delay his journey or retrace his steps, he was preparing to traverse it in the dark, when he beheld an old shepherd, from whom he asked the way. "Alas!" said the shepherd, "it is not easy to point it out, for the forest is crossed by hundreds of paths, which wind in every direction, and are almost similar in appearance, though all with one exception lead to the abyss." "To what abyss?" said the traveller. "The abyss which surrounds the forest," said the shepherd. "Moreover, the forest is filled with robbers and wild beasts, and is infested in particular with an enormous serpent, which commits dreadful ravages, so that scarcely a day passes but we find the remains of some unhappy travellers who have fallen a prey to it. Still, as it is impossible to arrive at the place you are going to without traversing the forest, I have, through a motive of compassion, stationed myself at the entrance of it to assist and direct travellers. I have also placed my sons at different intervals to assist me in the same good work. Their services and mine are at your disposal, and I am ready to accompany you if you desire it."

The candour and venerable appearance of the old man filled the traveller with confidence, and he at once accepted the proposal. With one hand the shepherd carried the lantern, and with the other he took the arm of the traveller. They then set out upon their journey.

After walking for some distance, the traveller felt his strength begin to fail. "Lean upon me," said the shepherd. The traveller did so, and was able to continue his journey. At length the lamp began to grow dim. "Alas!" said the traveller, "the oil is nearly spent, and the light will soon be out. What will become of us?" "Do not fear," replied the shepherd; "we shall soon meet with one of my sons, who

will supply us with oil." At the same moment they perceived through the darkness the glimmering of a light at a little distance. It proceeded from a small cabin by the side of the path. At the well-known voice of the shepherd, the door was opened. A seat was offered to the weary traveller, and some plain but substantial food was set before him. Thus recruited, he set out again after a short pause, guided by the son of the old shepherd.

Thus he journeyed on during the rest of the night, passing from time to time by different cabins built along the path, at all of which he obtained both refreshment and rest, and was furnished with fresh guides. At the dawn of day he arrived, without accident, at the boundary of the forest. Then he perceived the greatness of the service rendered him by the shepherd and his sons. A frightful precipice lay at his feet, at the bottom of which he could distinguish the roar of an angry torrent. "This," said his guide, "is the abyss which my father spoke of. No one knows its depth, for it is always covered with a thick fog, which no eye can penetrate."

As he spoke, he heaved a deep sigh, and wiped away a tear from his eyes. "You appear grieved," said the traveller. "Alas! how can I be otherwise?" replied his guide. "Can I look at the abyss without thinking of the thousands of unhappy people who are every day swallowed up in it. In vain do my father and ourselves offer our services. Very few accept of them, and of those few the greater portion, after journeying for a few hours, accuse us of alarming them without cause, despise our advice, and leave us. The consequence is, that they soon lose their way, and are devoured by the serpent, murdered by the robbers, or fall headlong into the abyss, for there is only this one little bridge by which it can be crossed, and the way which leads to this bridge is known to us alone. Pass over with confidence," continued he, turning to the traveller and embracing him. "On the other side is your true country." The traveller, overcome with gratitude, thanked his charitable guide, promised never to forget him, and, crossing the bridge, found himself at once in his own country and in the bosom of his family.—*Gaume. Catéchisme de Persévérance.*

My dear children, do you understand the meaning of this beautiful parable? The good shepherd you cannot mistake; he is our Blessed Lord. His sons are the pastors of the Church, who, succeeding one another, continue his work of guiding the pilgrim

safe through the perils and dangers of the world. The one only path which leads to the journey's end is the Catholic Church, which alone leads to heaven; all other roads lead to the abyss. The pilgrim is yourself; the lamp, the light of faith; the oil, the grace of God; and the food and refreshment, the Sacraments of the Church. Then there is the great serpent, who, you know, is the devil; while the robbers and wild beasts are wicked company and our own evil passions. The forest is the world, the bridge, death; the abyss, hell; and the pilgrim's true country, the kingdom of heaven.

How grateful, then, should we be to our good shepherd for providing us in his Church with so many means of escaping the dangers that beset us, and arriving at our heavenly kingdom!

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## SEVENTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Ninth Article—Continued. The Infallibility of the Church. The Communion of Saints. Purgatory, and Prayer for the dead.*

Q. Can the Church err in what she teaches?

A. No; she cannot err in faith or morals, for she is our infallible guide in both.

The Catholic Church, having been appointed by our Blessed Lord to guide us to eternal life, cannot fall into any error in her public teaching; otherwise she would not fulfil the end for which her Divine Founder made her. The catechism says, that *she cannot err in faith or morals*. This means that she cannot make any mistake in teaching us what we

have to *believe*, which is what is meant by *faith*, or what we have to *do*, which is what is meant by the word *morals*. Thus, when we speak of a man who does not believe the truths of religion, we say, "That man has no faith;" and when we speak of one who does not keep the commandments of God, we say, "He is a man of bad morals."

Now, our Blessed Lord, knowing well that, in order to be saved, we must both believe what he has taught us and practise what he has commanded us; and knowing, moreover, that, if left to ourselves, we should certainly go astray in both these points, has given us a *guide* or teacher, whom he has promised to preserve from all error, or who is, in other words, *infallible*. This most secure guide is, as you know, the Holy Catholic Church. When, therefore, we speak of the Church being infallible, or of the infallibility of the Church, we simply mean that she is preserved by God from the possibility of falling into any error or mistake in her public teaching.

You see now, my dear children, what it is which makes the faith of a Catholic so firm and secure. It is because he does not presume to judge for himself what our Blessed Lord taught or what he did not teach, but simply believes what the Church teaches, knowing that Jesus Christ has appointed her to make known his Divine truths to mankind. If ever, therefore, we are tempted against our faith, we have only to say, "I believe, O Lord, whatever the Catholic Church teaches," and immediately the temptation will vanish.

Q. What proof have you of this?

A. Christ has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church, that the Holy Ghost shall teach her all truth, and that He Himself will abide with her for ever.

In this answer are contained three clear and distinct proofs, from the Holy Scripture, that our Blessed Lord will never allow his Church to fall into any error. For he has solemnly promised—

*First.*—That the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church.\*

*Secondly.*—That the Holy Ghost shall teach her all truth.†

*Thirdly.*—That he himself will abide with her for ever.‡

In the first place, our Blessed Lord declared, at the same time that he appointed St. Peter to be his Vicar upon earth, *that the gates of hell should never be able to prevail against his Church.* “The gates of hell,” my dear children, in the language of the Holy Scripture, mean “the power of hell,” inasmuch as the gates of a fortified city are the strongest and most important portion of its defences. These plain words of our Blessed Lord are, therefore, a convincing proof that the devil can never for a moment get the better of the Catholic Church, which he certainly would be doing if he could get her to teach false doctrine to her children. In other words, it follows from this promise that the Church is infallible, or incapable of error.

In the second place, Jesus Christ has promised *that the Holy Ghost shall teach his Church all truth.* This promise was made by him at his last supper, when, being about to part from his beloved disciples, he told them not to let their hearts be troubled, for he would, when he had ascended into heaven, send them another Comforter, who should abide with them for ever, § the Spirit of Truth, who should teach them all truth, ¶ and bring to their minds whatever he had taught to them. || Now, it stands

\* Matt. xvi. 18.

† John xvi. 13.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 20.

§ John xiv. 16.

¶ Ib. xvi. 13.

|| Ib. xiv. 26.

to reason that if the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, dwells for ever with the Church, teaching her all truth, as our Blessed Lord has expressly promised, she cannot teach her children untruth; in other words, it follows that she is incapable of going astray in her public teaching.

Finally, our Blessed Lord has promised *to remain Himself also with his Church until the end of time*. These were our Blessed Lord's parting words to his disciples. "Behold," said he, "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Now we cannot for a moment suppose that our Blessed Redeemer could remain with a Church which had been deceived by the devil and led by him to teach false doctrine. But he *has* promised to remain with his Church, of which, indeed, he is the Spouse and the Invisible Head. It is plain, therefore, that the Church cannot go wrong in her teaching, otherwise she would have fallen under the power of the devil, and could no longer have our Blessed Lord abiding with her.

Q. What is meant by the Communion of Saints?

A. That all the faithful are members of one body, and assist each other by their prayers and good works.

We now come to the second part of the ninth article of the Apostles' Creed, namely, *the Communion of Saints*. This doctrine of the Communion of Saints is the necessary consequence of that of the Catholic Church, and therefore it is joined with it in one article. Listen and I will explain to you how this is, and also the meaning of this consoling doctrine.

You remember, I dare say, that when I asked, a Sunday or two since, this question, "What is the Catholic Church?" you answered me in the words of the catechism, "The union of all the faithful

under one head ; ” and, in answer to my next question, “ Who is that head ? ” you said that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. Now, to make us better understand the nature of this Union, the Apostle St. Paul, as I then explained to you, compares the Church of Christ to the human body, in which there is only one head, but many limbs, senses, and members, which have all some office or duty to perform for the common good of the whole body. Thus, the hands work for the support of the body, the feet convey it from place to place, the eyes watch to guard it from danger, the stomach digests the food, and so of the rest. So is it, my dear children, in the Church of Christ. Whatever good any member does, profits not only himself, but every member of the Church to which he belongs. In this manner, the prayers and works of penance of many holy monks and nuns, and other virtuous Catholics throughout the world, obtain for us, their fellow-members, many graces and blessings from God, though we do not know at the time through whose prayers they come. You will now understand partly what the catechism means when it says, that *all the faithful are members of one body, and assist each other by their prayers and good works.*

But besides the general blessing which the prayers and good works of each member of the Church draw down upon the whole Church and each one of the faithful, it is our happy privilege, by virtue of that intimate union which exists among us all, as members of one body, to be able to help in a special manner any one of our fellow-members for whom we are particularly bound, or wish, to pray. And you will easily understand this from what happens in the human body, which is so beautiful a model and pattern of the Catholic Church. If your foot is bruised, your hand can dress and bandage it ; if

your eye is tortured with a fly or speck of dust, your fingers can relieve it. If your hands themselves are numbed with cold, your feet can carry them to be warmed in the sun's rays or at the blazing fire. And so it is in the Catholic Church. If we see any of our fellow-members suffering or in want, or cold and lukewarm in the service of God, we can, by our prayers at least, if not by our words and works, comfort and strengthen them in their sufferings, obtain for them from God that relief which they stand in need of, and warm their hearts once more with the fire of Divine love.

You see from this, my dear children, how unhappy are those who, in punishment of some heinous or scandalous crime, are, by the command of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, to whom power has been given to bind and to loose, shut out from the Communion of the Church. By this severe punishment, which is called *excommunication*, the unhappy sinner is cut off as a useless and pernicious member from the mystical body, of which Christ is the head, just as we should cut off a leg or an arm which had begun to mortify, lest the whole body should become infected. The member thus excommunicated, being separated from the Church, is thereby deprived of all share in those prayers, good works, Holy Sacrifices, Sacraments, and spiritual graces, which, by the Communion of Saints, are the common property of all the faithful. He is like a rotten branch that is cut off from the tree, into which the sap of the parent trunk no longer penetrates, and which is good for nothing but as fuel for the fire. We have a terrible example of this most severe punishment related in the Holy Scriptures, in one of the letters of St. Paul, in which he excommunicates the incestuous Corinthian, and declares that, in punishment of his wicked and scandalous conduct, he gives him up to the power of the

devil.\* You will also find many examples of the same punishment related in the history of the Church.

Q. And have we any communion with the Saints in heaven?

A. Yes, we communicate with them, as our fellow-members, under the same head Jesus Christ, and are helped by their prayers.

Q. And are the souls in Purgatory helped by our prayers?

A. Yes; for "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."—2 *Machab.* xii. 46.

These answers show us that, besides the faithful upon earth, we have other fellow-members in the Church of Christ, namely, the Saints in heaven and the suffering souls in purgatory. For though they have passed from amongst us, their souls still live in the sight of God, and are still united with us by the bonds of charity. Hence the Church is sometimes said to consist of three parts :

*The Church Militant*, that is, the Church fighting upon earth, since her children are still fighting the battles of God against the wicked spirits ;

*The Church Triumphant* in heaven, where the Saints, who have happily triumphed over the devil, are now enjoying the fruits of their victory ; and

*The Church Suffering* in purgatory, composed of those poor souls who are now suffering for a time in purgatory on account of their sins.

Since, then, the Saints in heaven and the souls in purgatory are still *our fellow-members under the same head Christ Jesus*, it follows that *we communicate with them* both, as we do with the faithful upon earth, in all holy things. Thus the Saints help us by interceding for us with God, and we, in our turn, help the poor souls in purgatory by our prayers and good works. How sweet and consoling for a Catholic

\* 1 Cor. v.

is this thought! The Saints, when they die, are not dead to us; they are only removed into the presence of God, where they witness our combat, animate us by their example, and help us by their prayers. Neither are those whom we loved once upon earth, our parents, relations, and friends, if they died in the grace of God, gone beyond our reach. If not already in heaven interceding for us, they are at least in purgatory, where we can follow them by our prayers, console them in their sufferings, and obtain for them a speedy admission to the joys of heaven. Hence the Holy Scripture says, that *it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins*. Never forget this pious practice, my dear children. Pray for the poor suffering souls in purgatory at your night and morning prayers, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and especially whenever you approach the Holy Communion. Often repeat with fervour that little prayer used so frequently by the Church in her Divine Office, "May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace." And they, in their turn, will not forget you. Even now, in the midst of their sufferings, there is little doubt but that their prayers frequently ascend to God for his choicest blessings on those who come to their relief. But especially when they are at length numbered with the Saints and admitted to the presence of God, will they plead your cause at the throne of Divine grace; and when, in your turn, you yourselves shall have to pass through that cleansing fire, those holy souls will gladly fly to your relief, assuage your sufferings, and obtain for you by their prayers a speedy entrance into the joys of eternal life.

We read in the Holy Scripture, in the book of Machabees,\* a striking example of the care which

\* 2 Machab. xii. 34, &c.

the Jews were wont to take to fulfil the sacred duty of praying for the dead. When the valiant captain Judas Machabæus was fighting against the generals of King Antiochus, he suffered an unexpected reverse, and lost several of his men in battle in a manner which he could not account for. In the end, however, he gained the victory; and, on returning to the field of battle, in order to carry off for burial the bodies of the slain, he discovered, hid beneath their garments, certain idolatrous offerings, which these unhappy men had stolen from the temples of Jamnia during the recent sacking of that city. Judas at once perceived that God had suffered them to be slain in punishment of their sin. Trusting, however, that their untimely death had been accepted in atonement of their crime, and that they were not condemned at least to eternal torments, he determined to send rich presents to Jerusalem for the purpose of having sacrifice offered for the remission of their sin and the repose of their souls. He accordingly made a collection among his soldiers, and sent, as the Holy Scripture tells us, twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead. *It is, therefore, the inspired writer says in the words quoted in your catechism, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins.*

Q. What do you mean by Purgatory ?

A. A place where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins.

Yes; Purgatory is a place where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins. This is all that the Church teaches us with respect to the nature of purgatory. It is a place of suffering, but not of eternal suffering; and it is a place where the soul alone suffers, for, as to the body, it remains in the

grave after our death until the day of general judgment, when there will be no more purgatory, but only heaven and hell. It is, moreover, a place of *purgation* or cleansing, as its name signifies; that is to say, it is a place where the soul is purified from those lesser stains which prevent its entrance into the kingdom of heaven, into which nothing defiled can ever enter. As to the nature of the punishment which the soul suffers in purgatory, we know nothing, except that the sufferings of purgatory are far greater than any of the sufferings of this mortal life; for there Almighty God punishes sin as it deserves, that is to say, with strict Justice, whereas in this life he always tempers Justice with Mercy, and whatever be the sufferings which God sends us here, they are always far less than what the greatness of our sins deserves. With what care, therefore, ought we not, my dear children, to avoid those lesser sins, which, though they may not be sufficiently grievous to cause the eternal loss of our souls, will certainly have to be atoned for by most severe punishments either in this life or in purgatory!

Q. What souls go to Purgatory?

A. Those souls which depart this life in *venial* sin; or which have not fully paid the debt of *temporal* punishment due to their sins, the guilt of which has been forgiven.

Q. What do you mean by temporal punishment?

A. That which will have an end either in this world or the world to come.

The catechism here tells us that there are two classes of souls which go to purgatory, those *which depart this life in unforgiven venial sin*, and those *which have not fully paid the debt of temporal punishment due to the Justice of God for the sins, mortal or venial, the guilt of which has been forgiven*. For you must know that when God forgives the *guilt* of

a sin, he does not always remit the whole of the *punishment*. The principal punishment due to every mortal sin, namely, the eternal flames of hell, he always forgives when he forgives the sin and restores the soul to his grace; for no one can be at the same time a child of God and a child of hell. But as a good father, when he forgives a child, often inflicts some slight punishment, partly as an atonement for the fault committed, and partly as a warning for the future, so does Almighty God, in forgiving us the guilt and eternal punishment of sin, usually leave upon us some lesser chastisement to be endured either in this life or in purgatory. This punishment is called *temporal*, because it will end after a time; while that which will never end, namely, the punishment of hell, is called *eternal*. In reading your sacred history, you will find many instances of the infliction of this temporal punishment upon the repentant sinner after the guilt and eternal punishment had been forgiven him by God. Thus Adam, our first parent, having grievously offended God by eating the forbidden fruit, became afterwards, as is commonly believed, a sincere penitent; yet the sentence remained unchanged, that in labour and toil he should eat his bread all the days of his life until he returned to the dust out of which he was taken.\* Moses, in punishment of some little want of confidence in God, was, though a special favourite of heaven, forbidden to set foot on the promised land, after which he had so ardently sighed.† In like manner the whole nation of the Israelites, who had come out of Egypt, were, in punishment of their repeated murmurings, condemned by God to perish in the desert,‡ though there is little doubt that many among them repented and were in the end saved. Again, in the history of King David, we

\* Gen. iii. 17—19.

† Deut. xxxii. 48, &amp;c.

‡ Numb. xiv. 29, &amp;c.

find that, when he had fallen into the sin of pride in numbering his people, the prophet Nathan was sent by God to announce to him that, though his sin was pardoned on account of his sincere repentance, yet he must choose one of these three scourges, war, famine, or pestilence, as some atonement to the Justice of God.\*

From these examples, my dear children, we plainly see that Almighty God, in forgiving the guilt of sin, often leaves some temporal punishment to be endured. But as death may easily cut us off before we have discharged the debt we owe him, he has mercifully provided us with the means of satisfying his Divine Justice in the other life, namely, by the temporal sufferings of Purgatory.

Q. Have you any proof from Scripture that there is a purgatory?

A. Yes ; the Scripture teaches that God will render to every man according to his works, and that nothing defiled can enter heaven; and that some Christians shall be saved, yet so as by fire.—1 *Cor.* iii. 15.

This answer contains three proofs of the existence of purgatory, which are taken from the Holy Scripture. For ourselves we have no need of proofs either of purgatory or of any other doctrine taught by the Church, for we know from the promises of Christ that the Holy Ghost abides with the Church, teaching her all truth, and therefore that she cannot go astray or lead us into error. But as it may sometimes be our duty to show to others, who are not of the true faith, how exactly the teaching of the Church agrees with the teaching of Holy Scripture, therefore the catechism puts before us in this answer three separate proofs of purgatory, taken from the sacred writings.

\* 2 Kings xxiv. 13.

In the first place, the Scripture teaches us in many places *that God will render to every man according to his works*. Thus our Blessed Lord himself, in speaking of his coming at the last Judgment, says, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his Angels, and then will he render to every man according to his works." \* But what, you will ask, have these words to do with purgatory, of which no mention is here made? A great deal, my dear children, as you will soon see. For if Almighty God will render to every man according to his works, it is plain that those, who have committed lesser or venial sins, will not meet with the same punishment as those, who have committed mortal or grievous ones. Now we know that those, who die in the guilt of mortal sin, are condemned without hope to eternal punishment. What, then, will become of those who die in lesser or venial sin? Into heaven they certainly cannot enter until they have satisfied the Justice of God; but, at the same time, we cannot suppose that an infinitely Good God will condemn them for these lesser faults to the eternal flames of hell. Let us suppose, for example, that one man has murdered a fellow-creature, and that another has stolen an apple; moreover, that they both die without receiving pardon for the sin they have committed. Can we suppose for a moment that the man, who has stolen an apple only, will be condemned to the same eternal place of torments as he who has committed the heinous crime of murder? If this were so, God would not be rendering to every man *according to his works*, which we know from Holy Scripture that he does, and which his Justice indeed requires. Hence it clearly follows that there must be some middle place between heaven and hell, where he, who dies in the guilt of lesser sin, may be able to

\* Matt. xvi. 27.

discharge the debt of punishment he owes to God, and so enter into the everlasting joys of Paradise. That there is such a middle place the Church teaches us, and we call it Purgatory.

In the second place, the Scripture teaches us *that nothing defiled can enter heaven*.<sup>\*</sup> For heaven is the abode of God, who is Holiness itself, and of those pure spirits, the Angels, who ever minister at his throne. But which of us, even though he be not stained with the black guilt of mortal sin, has not some lesser stain of sin upon his soul, sufficient to render him unworthy to enter into that pure and holy abode? We know, indeed, that there are some happy souls who, at their death, have been found worthy of immediate admission into the company of the Blessed; the Martyrs, for example, who, by the generous sacrifice of their lives for Jesus Christ, have, as the Holy Scripture expresses it, washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb of God. In like manner many holy Confessors of the faith, Bishops, monks, and hermits, virgins and widows, and other Saints of God, have, for their patient sufferings and heroic virtues, been deemed worthy of the same privilege. But, alas, all are not Saints, even of those whom we commonly call good and holy! It stands to reason, therefore, since we cannot suppose that a Good and Merciful God will condemn to eternal flames those who are stained with these lesser sins and imperfections, and since, on the other hand, Holy Scripture assures us that no one defiled can enter into the pure abode of the Blessed, that there must be some other place, where the soul may be purified by suffering, and so rendered worthy to be admitted into the presence of God and the company of the Saints. This place of purification is commonly called Purgatory.

Finally, the Holy Scripture says, *that some souls*

<sup>\*</sup> Apoc. xxi. 27.

*shall be saved, yet so as by fire.\** What fire is it that is here spoken of? It is plain that it is not an earthly fire, for the Apostle St. Paul is here speaking of the judgment passed by God on our actions after death. Neither is it the fire of hell, since that will not save any one, but will burn for ever him that is thrown therein. It follows, therefore, that it must be the fire or sufferings of purgatory, which, as fire purifies gold or silver from any baser metal that is mixed with it, so cleanses the soul from the dross of sin, and makes it worthy to shine in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

You see, then, my dear children, that it is evident from Holy Scripture, that there is a place after death where the soul is purified from sin, which is the meaning of the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory.

We read in the acts of the martyrdom of St. Perpetua, who was put to death for the faith about two hundred years after Christ, a beautiful account of a vision, with which she was favoured by our Blessed Lord, respecting her deceased brother. As this vision shows us how the prayers, which we offer for the dead, serve both to relieve their sufferings and to hasten their release from Purgatory, I will now relate it to you as it was told by St. Perpetua herself to the companions of her martyrdom.

#### VISION OF ST. PERPETUA.

"A few days after receiving sentence, when we were all together in prayer, I happened to name Dinocrates, at which I was astonished, because I had not before had him in my thoughts; and I that moment knew that I ought to pray for him. This I began to do with great fervour and sighing before God, and the same night I had the following vision. I saw Dinocrates coming out of a dark place, where there were many others, exceedingly hot and thirsty. His face was dirty, his complexion pale, with the ulcer in his face, of

\* 1 Cor. iiii. 15.

which he died at seven years of age. There seemed a great distance between him and me, so that it was impossible for us to come to each other. Near him stood a vessel full of water, whose brim was higher than the stature of an infant. He attempted to drink, but, though he had water, he could not reach it. This mightily grieved me, and I awoke. By this I knew that my brother was in pain, but I trusted I could by prayer relieve him; so I began to pray for him, beseeching God with tears, day and night, that he would grant me my request, as I continued to do till we were removed to the camp prison, being destined for a public show on the festival of the Emperor. The day we were in the stocks I had this vision. I saw the place, which I had beheld dark before, now full of light, and Dinocrates, with his body very clean and well clad, refreshing himself; and, instead of his wound, a scar only. I awaked, and I knew he was relieved from his pain."

St. Perpetua, a few days after, finished her course by a glorious martyrdom, and soon, no doubt, had the happiness of embracing her little brother, whose sufferings she had relieved by her prayers, and whose happy release from purgatory she had hastened.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

The doctrine of Purgatory, and that of praying for the dead, which necessarily follows from it, are two of the most consoling truths of our holy faith. That religion must, indeed, be dreary and desolate, in which it is taught that those dear friends, who are torn from us by death, can no longer be helped by our prayers, and, if not sufficiently pure to be admitted at once into the presence of God, are condemned for ever to be banished from his sight. The history, which I am going to relate to you, will confirm the truth of what I say.

#### A PROTESTANT CONVERTED BY THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY.

A certain young man, a Protestant, residing in Scotland, had a brother whom he tenderly loved, but who was cut off by a premature death. He was deeply afflicted at so severe a loss, and refused all consolation. What grieved him particularly were the fears for his brother's salvation, which perpetually haunted his mind. He could not bear to think for a

moment that his brother was eternally lost, and yet, when he thought of the Holiness of God and the perfect purity required for admission into heaven, he knew not what to think. In a word, he was driven to the brink of despair, and could find no rest day or night. To divert his mind, he undertook, at the advice of his friends and physician, a journey to the Continent. Providence had so arranged that a Catholic priest sailed with him in the same vessel, and, on landing, lodged at the same hotel. The priest and the young Scotchman were frequently thrown together, and conversed on various subjects, till at last the young man revealed to his new friend the secret of the cruel anxiety which distracted his heart. The priest endeavoured to console him as well as he was able, and spoke to him of the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory and the Catholic practice of praying for the dead. "Oh!" exclaimed the young man, "if I were only able to pray for my dear brother, I should feel my heart relieved. Never would I pass a day without offering up my petitions to God for one whom I have so tenderly loved upon earth." This conversation made a deep impression upon the young man, and led him to inquire into the other doctrines of the Catholic Church. These inquiries soon removed his early prejudices, and a short time after he became a Catholic. *Catéchisme de Persévérance*, vol. iii.

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## EIGHTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Tenth Article. The Forgiveness of Sin. Means of Forgiveness. Nature of Sin. Original Sin.*

Q. What is the tenth article of the Creed?

A. The forgiveness of sins.

Q. What is meant by this article?

A. That there is in the Church of God forgiveness of sins for such as properly apply for it.

Q. To whom has Christ given power to forgive sins?

A. To the Apostles and their successors, the Bishops and Priests of his Church.

We come now, my dear children, to a very consoling article of the Apostles' Creed, namely, *the forgiveness of sins*. By this article we mean that our Blessed Lord has left in his Church the power of forgiving sins, and that every poor sinner who makes use of the means which he has appointed, can obtain forgiveness. This article comes naturally after the ninth article, which speaks of the Catholic Church, inasmuch as the power of forgiving sins is one of the most glorious privileges of the Church of God. When our Blessed Lord lived upon earth, he himself forgave in person the sins of those who came to him with proper dispositions. You remember, I am sure, the beautiful history of St. Mary Magdalen coming to our Lord through the midst of the guests, as he sat at table in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and how she threw herself at his feet, watered them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Our dear Lord did not send her away without her reward. When the Pharisees murmured at him for permitting so great a sinner to approach him, he took up her defence, and, after rebuking her accusers, turned to her with a look of tender compassion, and said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." \* Then, again, when the poor paralytic was let down to him through the roof of the house on account of the great throng, Jesus said to him in like manner, "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." †

It was not, however, the Will of God that his Divine Son should remain always visibly upon earth; and as our Blessed Lord, in his Infinite Goodness, desired all to be saved, those who should be born in after ages, as well as those who lived in the world in his own lifetime, shortly before he ascended into heaven he appeared to his Apostles, and bestowed on them the same power of forgiving sins which he

\* Luke vii. 37, &c.

† Matt. ix. 2, &c.

himself had exercised while among men. "As the Father hath sent me," said he to them, "I also send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."\* This wonderful power, having been granted by Christ to his Church for the benefit of mankind in all times and in all places, has been handed down by the Apostles to their successors, that is to say, to those who succeed them in their sacred office, namely, *the Bishops and Priests of the Church*. It is to them, therefore, as the ministers of Christ, that we must have recourse to obtain that pardon which our Blessed Lord has purchased for us at the price of his Precious Blood.

Q. By what sacraments are sins forgiven?

A. Principally by Baptism and Penance.

You see now, my dear children, that Jesus Christ has left in his Church the power of forgiving sin, and that he has placed this power in the hands of his Bishops and Priests, to be exercised by his authority and in his name. But, notice, it is not every one whose sins are pardoned; those only obtain this forgiveness who, as your catechism says, *properly apply for it*, that is to say, by making use of the means which our Blessed Lord has appointed for the purpose. These means are *principally* the Holy Sacraments of *Baptism and Penance*, by which the Precious Blood of our Lord, which is the source of all grace and pardon, is applied to our souls to wash out from them the stains of sin. Thus Baptism forgives us the sin of our first parents, in which we were all born, and Penance the sins which we commit ourselves.

But why do we say that sins are forgiven *principally* by Baptism and Penance? Are there any

\* John xx. 21-23.

other means by which we may obtain pardon from God? Yes, in certain cases there are; but these two Sacraments are, as the catechism says, the chief and most important means. For example, we can obtain pardon for lesser sins by an act of true sorrow, and even for greater sins, if our sorrow be from the love of God and we have the desire and intention of going to Confession as soon as we are able. Then there is the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which we receive when we are dangerously ill, and which forgives us the remains of sin that may perhaps be left on the soul after it has been purified by the Sacrament of Penance; and there are other means, too, which you will come to know later. Thus has our Blessed Lord, like a good physician, mercifully provided a remedy for all the wounds and diseases of our souls.

But tell me, my dear children, are there not some sins too great to be forgiven by Almighty God, and are there not some sinners whose crimes are so enormous that they have no reason to hope for pardon? No, most certainly not. When we say that we believe in *the forgiveness of sins*, we mean in the forgiveness of *every* sin, however great, if only we truly repent of it, for there is no limit to the Mercy of God, and there is no sin so black that it cannot be washed away with the Blood of the Son of God. Listen, and I will tell you a beautiful story, which shows us that God never refuses to receive the greatest sinner, if he be truly penitent.

#### THE HERMIT AND THE ROBBER.

A certain hermit, who had lived for many years in great reputation for sanctity, began at length to entertain dangerous thoughts of self-complacency. Filled with these temptations, he was setting out one morning to visit a neighbouring church, when he beheld, seated on the banks of the river which flowed

past his little cell, a poor man, who appeared to be weeping bitterly. On approaching him he perceived that the afflicted man was a notorious robber, the terror of the surrounding country. The hermit was about to retrace his steps, when the man advanced to meet him, threw himself at his feet, confessed his many crimes, and begged to know if he might ever hope for pardon. The hermit, astonished and shocked at hearing the recital of so many and such enormous sins, and, comparing them with his own innocent and blameless life, began to swell with pride, and, in tones of indignation, exclaimed, "Dost thou hope for pardon, thou wicked sinner? Sooner shall roses bloom upon this dry staff, than a Just God grant forgiveness to such sins as thine." So saying, he turned away, leaving the poor sinner on the brink of despair.

The hermit had not proceeded far, when the staff which he carried in his hand became rooted in the ground. He endeavoured to pull it out, but it resisted all his efforts, and became every moment more firmly seated in the soil. Then he beheld bud, and leaf, and flower sprouting rapidly, until at last the dry stick was laden with beautiful roses; and at the same time he heard a voice whispering, "Sooner shall roses bloom on the barren staff than a Good God refuse mercy to the repenting sinner or grant it to the proud one." Filled with shame and contrition, the hermit fell on his knees, and, with many tears, begged pardon for his sin; then, rising, he once more endeavoured to release his staff. This time it yielded to his grasp, and, bearing it in his hand, he returned in haste to the spot where he had left the robber. "See, brother," said he, showing him the staff all covered with roses, "the wonder which Almighty God has worked to convince me of my fault and you of his tender Mercy. Fear not, lest God should refuse to pardon you. In the Church he has left an abundant fountain of grace, his Precious Blood, in which he who sincerely repents may wash away the blackest crimes. Come, then, with me to my cell, that together we may avail ourselves of this means of grace, and bewail our sins for the rest of our lives." Much comforted, the robber dried his tears, and followed the hermit to his cell. Here they planted the staff before the door, and it grew into a beautiful tree, the sight of which served as a continual encouragement to persevere in a spirit of humility and firm hope in the Divine Mercy.—*The Little Flower Garden.*

Q. What is sin?

A. An offence against God; or any thought, word, or deed, against the law of God.

Sin, my dear children, is *an offence against God*. It is a rising up or rebellion of the creature against the God that made him. It is an outrage against the Holy Law, that is to say, the commandments which God has given to man, and by which he makes known to us his Divine Will. And, as this outrage may be committed either by thought, by word, or by act, therefore the catechism adds, *or any thought, word, or deed against the law of God*. Now, of all evils in the world sin is the greatest. It is, indeed, the only real evil; and every thing else that we consider an evil, such as death, sickness, &c., is either the punishment or consequence of sin. Let us consider, therefore, for a moment, how detestable an evil sin is, in order that we may have a sincere horror of it, which will be a great help to avoid it.

In the first place, the sinner, that is, he who commits sin, rises up in rebellion against Almighty God, and refuses to obey him. God commands him, for example, not to steal, and the sinner answers, "I will steal in spite of the command of God." Almighty God commands him to hear Mass upon Sunday, and he answers, "I will not hear Mass, though God orders me to do so." And yet, at the same time, the sinner knows that he is the creature of God, made by the hand of God out of the dust of the earth, and therefore bound to serve and obey him. He knows that he owes all that he has to the Goodness of God, his very being and existence, the food that he eats, the clothes he puts on, the very air he breathes. He knows, moreover, that all that God orders him to do is just and reasonable, and that Almighty God promises him eternal happiness if he will obey him. Nevertheless, the sinner, knowing all this, flies in the face of God, and says, if not in words, at least in deeds, that he will not do what God tells him. Can you imagine a blacker and baser ingratitude than sin?

In the second place, you will understand better how black and ugly a monster sin is, when I tell you that all that man of himself could do to atone for sin, would not be able to make satisfaction for or blot out the guilt even of the smallest sin. For example, not all the tears of the whole world could of themselves wash away the guilt of a bad word, an angry blow, or a little lie of excuse. No, my dear children, not even all the torments of the martyrs, nor all the sufferings that have been or could be endured by man from the beginning of the world till the day of judgment, would of themselves be sufficient to atone for the smallest sin. And why? Because sin is an offence against *God*, and God is so Great, so Holy, and so Pure, that it requires nothing less than the sufferings and blood of God himself to atone for it. It is for this reason that the ever Blessed Son of God, equal to his Father in all things, became man and died a cruel death upon the cross, that he might make proper atonement for our sins, and wash them out with his own most Precious Blood. It is true, indeed, that our works of penance, our prayers also, and our sufferings, all help to obtain our pardon from God; but it is only on account of the Precious Blood and cruel sufferings of our Divine Redeemer that they are able to do so. How black and deadly an evil, then, must sin be, which can only be blotted out with the blood of a God!

Thirdly, it is sin, and sin only, which has brought every evil into the world. Disease, suffering, and death are the punishment of sin. The crosses and afflictions which fall upon us in this world are sent by God to enable us to make satisfaction for our sins before the day of Judgment, when the Justice of God would condemn us to a much severer punishment. Finally, it is sin which has lit up the fire of purgatory, and the still more awful flames of hell,

which will for ever feed upon the sins of men. Let us, then, always look upon sin as the worst of evils that can befall us, and avoid it as we would do an armed murderer or a pestilence. "Flee from sins," says the Holy Scripture, "as from the face of a serpent; for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee. The teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men. All iniquity is like a two-edged sword." \*

Q. How many kinds of sin are there?

A. Two; original and actual.

Q. What is original sin?

A. It is the sin in which we were conceived.

Q. How came we to be conceived in sin?

A. Through Adam's sin, when he ate the forbidden fruit.

Your catechism tells you that there are two kinds of sin, original and actual. Original sin is *the sin in which we were conceived*, and which comes down from our first parents; actual sin is *that which we ourselves commit*, for example, when we steal, quarrel, tell lies, &c. Original sin is so called because it is the first sin that was ever committed, and is the cause and origin of every other sin. The name of *actual* is given to all other sins, because they are committed by our own act, and do not come down to us from another. Let us now see how it was that man was first so unhappy as to fall into sin, that is to say, how it was that *original* sin came into the world.

I told you, my dear children, that when Almighty God created Adam and Eve, he placed them in the beautiful garden of paradise, and there provided for all their wants, promising that, if they continued good, he would, after a certain time, take them to

\* Eccles. xxi. 2-4.

himself in heaven without dying, there to fill up the places of the fallen angels. But, first of all, his Divine Justice required that, by their obedience, they should prove themselves worthy of the happiness he had in store for them. He accordingly laid on them one command, a very easy one you will think. It was simply not to eat of the fruit of one of the trees in the garden, which was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Almighty God told them, at the same time, how much depended on their obedience to this command, and that, if they disobeyed him, they should not only lose all that he had promised them, but should *die* in punishment of their crime.

At first Adam and Eve did in everything as God had told them. They had plenty of delicious fruits to eat, and they never thought for a moment of disobeying the good God who had made them, and whom they knew to be so worthy of their love and obedience. At length, however, the devil, who was one of the wicked angels who had rebelled against God, and had been cast down into hell in punishment of their crime, envying the happiness which he saw Adam and Eve enjoying, and burning with rage at the thought that God intended them and their descendants to fill those glorious places in heaven which he and his companions had lost by sin, determined to get them to sin likewise, and so to draw on them the anger and punishments of God. He accordingly entered, with God's permission, into the body of a serpent, and came and took up his place near the tree on which hung the forbidden fruit. Soon after Eve passed by, and the devil, seeing her, thus addressed her :

“How is it, O Eve, that God does not allow you to eat of the delicious fruits that hang on the trees in this garden?”

You see that the devil began, according to his custom, by telling Eve a big lie, for God had not forbidden them to eat of any of the fruits, except one. Eve, who might have known at once, from the insolent language of the devil and his wicked lie, that it was an enemy of God who had come to tempt her, should have run away at once from so dangerous a companion. On the contrary, she foolishly trusted to her own strength, and stopped to argue with the devil, and show him that he was wrong.

"You are wrong," she said; "God *does* allow us to eat of the fruits which grow in this garden, and it is only the fruit of this one tree which he has forbidden us to eat of, lest we die."

"You are mistaken," said the devil. "It is not *lest you die* that God has forbidden you to eat of this fruit, but lest, by eating of it, you should become like gods, having the knowledge of good and evil."

Foolish Eve listened attentively to the cunning words of the tempter; her vanity was flattered at the thought of becoming like God himself, and she began to have an eager longing for the fruit, which hung in delicious clusters before her eyes. At length, she stretched forth her hand, and plucked, and eat of it; and, having done so, sought out in haste her husband Adam, and persuaded him to become the partner of her guilt, and to eat of it in like manner.

No sooner was the crime committed than the punishment followed. Almighty God, in a terrible voice, summoned the guilty pair before him, and, with fear and trembling, they obeyed his call. In vain they sought to excuse themselves; Adam laid all the blame upon Eve, and Eve upon the devil; but God, who saw the guilt of each, was not to be deceived, and passed upon them the terrible sentence which they had so justly deserved.

"And the Lord God said to the serpent, *Because*

*thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all the beasts of the earth ; upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed ; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*

“To the woman also he said, *I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions ; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband’s power, and he shall have dominion over thee.*

“And to Adam he said, *Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work : with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.*”

Almighty God then drove them out of paradise, and placed an Angel at the entrance, with a flaming sword, to prevent their return.\*

Thus, my dear children, “did sin enter into the world, and by sin death,” † the twofold death of the body and of the soul. For if Adam had not sinned, and we also had preserved our innocence, we should, by eating of the tree of life which God had placed in the garden of Eden, have been preserved continually in health and strength, and finally have passed without dying from the earthly to the heavenly paradise. But worse than this by far was the death of the soul, by which Adam and all his descendants became enemies of God ; and were it not for the Sacrament of Baptism, which our Blessed Saviour has mercifully provided for us, and which washes us

\* Gen. iii.

† Rom. v. 12.

from original sin and makes us once more children of God and heirs of heaven, this spiritual death would have prevented us from ever entering into the presence of God and the company of the Angels. Besides all this, our souls, by original sin, have become darkened with ignorance, so that we are far less capable of knowing and understanding the truths of religion, and indeed of acquiring any knowledge, than Adam was when first created. Moreover, that other power of the soul, which is called the will, has been weakened and corrupted ; so that we are born with an inclination to evil rather than to good, and have continually to do violence to ourselves to overcome our passions and evil inclinations. All this is the unhappy consequence of that black stain of original sin which comes down to us from our first parents, and in which, as the catechism tells you, *we are all conceived*.

#### THE WOOD-CUTTER AND HIS WIFE.

A certain king, who had lost his way in hunting, was endeavouring to regain the path, when he heard voices at a little distance. On approaching, he found that it was a poor wood-cutter and his wife, who were talking together at their work.

"It must be owned," said the woman, "that mother Eve was very greedy to eat the apple. If she had only done as God told her, we should have no need to work and slave as we do now."

"If Eve was greedy," replied the man, "Adam was a fool to do as she bade him. If I had been in his place and you had come to me with the apple, I would have given you a box on the ear and sent you about your business."

Scarcely had he spoken these words, when the king came up. "Good people," said he, "you seem to work very hard." "Yes, sir," answered they, for they did not know that it was the king ; "we work like slaves from morning till night, and yet we can hardly gain a living." "If you will come and live with me," said the king, "I will maintain you both without working." At the same moment the attendants of

the king came up, and the poor wood-cutters were greatly surprised and no less rejoiced at their unexpected adventure.

The king, as he had promised, took them to his palace, where he gave them splendid apartments, rich dresses, a carriage, horses, and servants in livery. During the first month the time passed very happily. Every day they had twelve dishes at table, and on the last day they had twenty. In the middle of the table was a large dish with a cover upon it. The woman, being very curious, put out her hand to uncover it, but one of the king's servants checked her, and told her that the king had given strict orders that that dish should on no account be touched or uncovered.

As soon as the servants left the room, the wood-cutter, perceiving that his wife was very melancholy and eat nothing, asked her what ailed her. She replied that she would not give a pin for all the fine things on the table, but she longed for a bit out of the covered dish. "Foolish woman," said her husband, "did you not hear that the king has forbidden us to touch it." "The king is very unreasonable," said the woman. "If he would not have us see what is in the dish, he should not have ordered it to be put on the table." At the same time she began to cry, saying that her husband did not love her, and that she would kill herself if he would not uncover the dish.

The wood-cutter felt moved when he saw his wife cry, and, as he loved her dearly, he told her that he would do anything in the world to please her, if she would not make herself unhappy. So saying, he lifted up the cover from the dish, when out jumped a little white mouse, which scampered away in an instant. They both ran after it, but, before they could catch it, the king came in, and gravely asked them what had become of the mouse. "Please your majesty," said the man, who, as you may suppose, looked very foolish, "my wife teased me so long to see what was in the dish, that I could not help uncovering it, and the mouse has got away." "Oh, oh!" replied the king. "You said some time ago that if you had been Adam, you would have given Eve a box on the ear for being curious and greedy; you should have remembered your resolution. And you, silly woman; you had everything here that you could possibly wish for, but all was not enough; you must needs, like Eve, taste the forbidden fruit. Go, foolish people; return to your labour in the forest, and never again blame Adam and Eve for the hardships you endure, since you have been guilty of the very same folly."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

Q. Are all mankind conceived in sin ?

A. Yes, all mankind, except the Blessed Virgin, who, by a special privilege and grace of God, through the merits of her Son, was conceived without the stain of original sin.

Of all mankind the Blessed Virgin alone *was conceived without the stain of original sin*. This, as the catechism says, was *a special privilege and grace*, or favour, which God granted to her whom he had chosen to be his own Mother. The catechism also says that this grace was given to Mary *through the merits of her Son*, for the Passion and Death of our Blessed Lord are the source of all merit, and all the graces, which have been given by God to any of the Saints or to the Blessed Mother of God, have been merited for them by our dear Saviour's bitter Sufferings and cruel Death.

You will now see what is the meaning of a word which you have often heard, but perhaps never properly understood; namely, the *Immaculate Conception* of the Blessed Virgin. It means the special grace by which Mary alone, of all mankind, was in her very Conception preserved from the stain of Adam's sin. This is one of the most glorious privileges of our Lady; it was a more happy thing for her never to have been the enemy of God by sin, than even for her to have been chosen to be his Mother. It was not, indeed, fitting that she, who was to bring into the world the God of all Holiness, should ever be defiled with the least stain of sin, or be displeasing to Him whom she was to bring forth. We could not for a moment suppose this possible, even if the Church did not teach us that Mary was conceived Immaculate. Such, however, has ever been the belief of the Catholic Church; and, in our own lifetime, the saintly Pope Pius IX. has solemnly declared in a vast assembly of Bishops from all parts of the world, that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception

of the Blessed Virgin is an article of Catholic faith, and that no one can call it in question without becoming a heretic and being cut off from the Communion of the Church.

I earnestly recommend you, my dear children, to have a great devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and frequently to honour your heavenly Mother under this title. This you do when you thank God for this great grace which he has bestowed upon her, or when you ask some favour of God for the sake of her Immaculate Conception, and especially when you keep from sin in honour of her perfect freedom from all sin, both original and actual. I would advise you also to wear always about your necks the medal of Mary Immaculate, which is commonly called the miraculous medal, and in moments of temptation to repeat the little prayer engraved upon it, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to thee." You will find this little ejaculation of immense help in enabling you to overcome the attacks of the devil.

But there is one grace above all others, which you should ask of God through the merits of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. I mean the great grace of holy purity, that virtue which Mary loves so well, and which, if you love it too, will make you such special favourites of your Blessed Mother. For this intention, you might say, according to the advice of St. Alphonsus and the example of many servants of God, three Hail Marias, before retiring to rest, in honour of this mystery. And you might sometimes repeat, for the same intention, this beautiful prayer, to which an indulgence is attached: "By thy sacred Virginity and Immaculate Conception, O most pure Virgin and Queen of Angels! obtain for me purity of soul and body."

I have spoken to you, my dear children, of the

miraculous medal, which we wear in honour of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mother of God. Listen, and I will now tell you how it was revealed by our Lady herself to a holy nun at Paris.

#### THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL.

In the month of September, 1830, a novice of the Sisters of Charity was praying in the church before the altar, when she suddenly beheld suspended in the air a picture of the Blessed Virgin. On gazing upon it, she saw that our Lady was clothed in a robe of pure white, with a mantle of silvery blue; her hands were stretched open towards the earth, but appeared covered with diamonds, from which rays of extraordinary brightness shone in all directions. At the same time she heard a voice saying, "These rays are the symbols of the graces which Mary obtains for man." Around the picture the following words were written in letters of gold: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." In a few moments the picture was reversed, and on the other side she saw the letter "M," surmounted by a cross, and underneath the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Presently the voice again spoke, commanding that a medal should be struck according to the pattern shown her, and declaring that whoever should wear that medal indulgenced should enjoy the special protection of the Mother of God.

The novice, on the following day, related the vision to her confessor, who, fearing lest it should be the effect of her imagination, told her to dismiss it from her thoughts, and take no notice of what had happened. The humble novice obeyed, but in a few months the vision was repeated. This time also the confessor told her to pay no attention to it. A third time, however, the same vision appeared to her, and on this occasion the voice added that the Blessed Virgin was displeased that the medal had not been struck.

The confessor, being now at a loss how to act, related the whole affair to the Archbishop of Paris, who immediately gave permission for the medal to be struck, adding that a practice so likely to promote devotion to the Blessed Virgin, could hardly come from an evil source.

Since that time the use of the miraculous medal has become very general among the devout servants of Mary, and innumerable instances are related of the special graces, both spiritual and temporal, which have everywhere attended the use of it.—*The Graces of Mary.*

## NINETEENTH INSTRUCTION.

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*Tenth Article—Continued. Actual Sin Mortal  
and Venial Sin.*

Q. What is actual sin?

A. Every sin which we ourselves commit.

Q. How is actual sin divided ?

A. Into mortal sin and venial sin.

You will remember, my dear children, that in our last instruction we were speaking about the sin which was committed by our first parents in the garden of paradise, and which we commonly call *original* sin. I told you that the guilt of that great sin has come down like a black stain on the souls of all mankind, and that every one is born in it, except the Blessed Virgin, who was preserved from it through the merits of her Divine Son by a special grace or privilege, which we call her Immaculate Conception. We now come to speak of those sins *which we ourselves commit* by our own act and deed, and which we call *actual* sins. These actual sins are, as your catechism says, either *mortal* or *venial*, according as they kill the soul or only render it less pleasing to God. For it is with the soul as it is with the body. There are some wounds, you know, which, if they are inflicted on the body, are sure to produce death ; for example, if a man be stabbed to the heart or shot through the head ; *mortal* sins are like these. But there are other wounds, which only make a person less strong and able to work ; for

example, if he gets a cut on the finger or a bruise on the leg. These wounds, you see, are like *venial* sins, which do not kill the soul outright, but render it less strong and healthy, less pleasing to God, and less able to do good works. The catechism speaks first of mortal sin. Tell me, then,

Q. What is mortal sin?

A. It is a grievous offence against God.

Q. Why is it called mortal?

A. Because it kills the soul and deserves hell.

Q. How does mortal sin kill the soul?

A. By depriving the soul of its supernatural life, which is the grace of God.

Yes, my dear children, mortal sin *is a grievous*, that is to say, a “very great” *offence against God*. In other words, it is doing what we know will displease God very much indeed, and make us lose altogether his grace and friendship. It is called *mortal*, because it kills the soul, for mortal means “that which will kill,” or, in other words, “deadly.” Thus we speak of a mortal wound or a mortal disease, meaning a wound or disease which is sure to produce death. Now, there are some sins, as I told you, which are like mortal wounds and diseases in the soul, because they are so opposed to and so displeasing to God, as to deprive the soul altogether of his grace and friendship. The soul then becomes dead in the sight of God, for it is *the grace of God* which is, as the catechism says, *its supernatural life*. It is true that in the sight of men the soul still appears to be living, since it is still united to the body, and the sinner can think, speak, and act as he could before he fell into sin; but, for all that, the soul is dead in the sight of God and his Angels. You will see from this that the words *supernatural life* mean “that life which we

have in the sight of God by being his friends and his children ;” our *natural* life is “that which we have in the eyes of men by our souls being still united to our bodies.” This last kind of life is of little value compared with the first.

See, then, my dear children, what a dreadful evil mortal sin must be, since he who has committed it carries about in his living body a dead soul, which is hideous and loathsome beyond expression. Which of you would like to carry about a dead body in your arms, and how much less would you like to sleep with it in your beds ! But he who is stained with the guilt of mortal sin, carries about with him continually a frightful corpse, namely, his dead soul. Whether he walks or sits, or lies down to sleep, he has it with him in the closest embrace, for it is within his body ; nor does it ever leave him, until, by true repentance and a good confession, it is restored to life by recovering the grace of God. It is true that *we* cannot see our souls in this state, and it is well we cannot, for the very sight of it would strike us dead, it is so ugly and frightful ; but God sees it, the Blessed Virgin sees it, our Guardian Angel sees it, and they are struck with horror at the sight.

But worse than all this, mortal sin makes us enemies of God and children of hell. While we live, the anger of God is for ever stretched over us, and if we die in this state, we fall at once into the eternal flames of hell. Ah ! my dear children, have a great horror of mortal sin, which inflicts so many evils on both soul and body. Avoid it as you would the plague or death itself ; and if ever you have the unhappiness to fall into it, seek at once the pardon of God by a sincere sorrow and a good confession. Shun carefully the occasions that are likely to lead you into sin, particularly dangerous places of amusement, bad books, and wicked companions.

## THE FALL OF THE ANGELS.

Many thousand years ago, before Almighty God created Adam and Eve, and placed them in the garden of paradise, he created millions of pure spirits, who are called Angels. These noble beings were endowed by God with many admirable qualities. They were made by him of surpassing beauty, gifted with great power, and had knowledge and intelligence bestowed on them at their first creation far beyond what man can hope to attain to. They were created by God to love him and praise him, to be his messengers and carry his commands to every part of the universe, and to enjoy for ever the glory of his presence and the delights of heaven. Before bestowing upon them, however, the eternal possession of these favours, Almighty God put them to a trial, as he afterwards put Adam and Eve to a trial, that they might, by an act of their free will, show themselves worthy of the happiness he intended for them. He laid upon them a command; we do not exactly know the nature of it, but it is commonly thought that it was to adore his Divine Son made man for our salvation. The greater portion of the Angels gladly embraced this opportunity of showing their love and fidelity to that Good God who had lavished so many favours upon them, and, in reward for their obedience, God confirmed them in possession of all the graces he had given them, and bestowed upon them an eternity of happiness. But very many of them unhappily, led by the proud spirit Lucifer, one of the brightest and most glorious of the heavenly host, refused to obey the command of God. So far from adoring the God who made them, made man for the salvation of the world, they sought themselves to become as gods, and raised aloft the standard of revolt. In an instant the vengeance of the Almighty God fell heavily upon their guilty heads. At the command of God, the good Angels, headed by the brave Archangel St. Michael, hurled down Lucifer with all his followers from their bright thrones in heaven into the bottomless pit of hell, which God created for their eternal punishment. Our Blessed Lord, in warning his Apostles not to be proud and presumptuous, reminds them of this dreadful fall, when he says, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven." \*

See, my dear children, the dreadful evil of sin, since one single mortal sin turned millions of beautiful Angels into ugly devils, and buried them for ever in the flames of hell.

\* Luke x. 18.

Q. What is venial sin?

A. That sin which does not kill the soul, yet displeases God.

We now come to speak of the other kind of sin which we commit ourselves, namely, *venial sin*. Venial sin, as the catechism says, is *that sin which does not actually kill the soul*, as mortal sin does, but which, nevertheless, *displeases Almighty God*. Hence it follows that venial sin is, after mortal sin, the greatest evil that is to be found in the world, since God is offended by it, a God infinitely Great and Good and Amiable, and worthy of all our love and homage. No evil can for a moment compare with the evil of an offence against Almighty God; it were better that the whole world should be destroyed, than that God should be offended in the smallest point.

But even if we look at ourselves only, we shall easily see how dreadful an evil venial sin is, and that it would be better that any misfortune should befall us, rather than that we should give way to the smallest venial sin. In the first place, it robs us, though not entirely, at least in part, of the grace and friendship of God. Now there is nothing more precious in the world than the grace of God; therefore, whatever deprives us of this should justly be considered a lamentable evil. It is true that venial sin does not separate us entirely from God; it does not drive him altogether from our souls, but it grieves him, puts an obstacle to his grace, and renders him less likely to assist and protect us. Hence it is that persons, who go on committing venial sin wilfully and deliberately, soon fall away into mortal sin. For, not being strengthened and supported by the same powerful grace which God formerly gave them, and which they have gradually lost by their own fault, they easily fall away when a strong temptation

comes, and thus lose altogether the friendship of God. Hence you may be sure, when a person falls into some great mortal sin, that it is because he has taken little pains to avoid venial faults.

Another reason which should make us very much afraid of committing venial sin, is the severe punishment which Almighty God inflicts on those who commit it, both in this world and the world to come. Very many of the afflictions which fall upon us in this life, such as pain, sickness, and want, are sent by God as a punishment for our *venial* as well as for our mortal sins; and as to the sufferings of purgatory, where venial sin is punished after death, they are, as many of the Fathers tell us, far greater than any of the torments and sufferings of this life. Now, supposing that one of you were tempted to steal a penny, and knew that, if you stole it, you would be thrown into prison or burnt on a slow fire, do you think that you would take it? Most assuredly you would not. And yet we *do* know that, if we die in the guilt of venial sin, we shall be cast into the prison and burnt in the fire of purgatory. Let us always remember, therefore, when we are tempted to commit venial sin, that Almighty God will be sure to punish it either in this life or in the next. Certainly, I would have you to avoid venial sin for a better motive than this, namely, because it offends your Good and Loving God. But as this motive is not always sufficient to touch our hard and stony hearts, it is useful sometimes to think of his just punishments. For “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” \*

Q. Why is it called venial?

A. Because it is more easily pardoned than mortal sin.

Venial sin is so called, as the catechism says, *because it is more easily pardoned than mortal sin.*

\* Ps. cx. 10,

For the word *venial* means "pardonable," being taken from a Latin word which signifies "pardon." It is true that mortal sin is pardonable, too; but it is, as you may suppose, far more easy to obtain pardon for a sin which only displeases God, than for one which makes us his direct enemies, and separates us entirely from him, as mortal sin does. For the forgiveness of mortal sin, God has, in his Goodness, given us the Sacrament of Penance, in which, by a good confession, joined with a hearty sorrow and the priest's absolution, we may have our sins, however heinous they may be, washed away in the Blood of his Divine Son; but for the forgiveness of venial sin he has given us many other means besides this Sacrament. Sincere acts of sorrow, acts of the love of God, and works of penance, done with proper dispositions, are some of these means, and help to purify our souls from the lesser faults into which we daily fall.

In saying your night prayers, you are taught to pause for a few moments to make a little examination of conscience, that is to say, to think over the sins you have committed during the day against Almighty God. Then follows the act of sorrow or contrition. You now see that if you say this act with a real sorrow of heart, it will obtain you the pardon of your venial sins; but you should have, at the same time, a firm resolution of trying to avoid them for the future. This you should try to put in practice next day. If, for example, you have told lies, you should try not to tell them any more; if you have been angry, you should try to be gentle and kind; if you have been sulky, to be pleasant and cheerful; if disobedient, to be willing and docile. But even if you fall the next day into some little fault, you should not lose courage, but try to obtain pardon from God by a good act of contrition and a firm reso-

lution to do better the day following. If you will persevere in this practice, your faults will gradually become less grievous and fewer in number; your passions will grow daily weaker and weaker; you will be preserved from the danger of falling into mortal sin, and will increase every day in the favour and love of God. Oh, my dear children, how happy will you be if you act in this way! You will then learn by experience how good God is to those who seek him, how sweet and bountiful to those who love him. Believe me, there is no true happiness to be found on earth except in the love and service of so good a God.

#### HISTORY OF JUDAS.

Among the Apostles called by our Lord to be the first Bishops and pillars of his infant Church, was the traitor Judas Iscariot. This unhappy man was entrusted with the care of the purse, in which was placed the money intended to supply the necessary wants of our Blessed Lord and his Apostles. Judas, unhappily, had a besetting sin, a bad passion, which he kept carefully concealed within his own breast. He strove to hide it from our Lord himself, but He well knew all that passed in the heart of the wretched man, and would have taught him how to fight against and overcome the temptation had he been willing to own and confess it. Thus it is that a false shame of mentioning our sins and temptations in confession is frequently the cause of the eternal ruin of our souls.

To return to Judas—the fatal passion which led him by degrees to his ruin was an ardent love for money. He kept the purse, and, like a miser, he gloated over the money that was in it, and began at first to hoard it as if it were his own. He next commenced to pilfer from it little sums to add to his own private store; bye and bye these sums became larger, and at last he became a confirmed thief. When the penitent Magdalen poured the precious ointment over the feet of our Blessed Redeemer, Judas took offence, and hypocritically said, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?” But “he said this,” the holy Scripture adds, “not because he cared for the poor, but

because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein."\*

Blinded by his passion for money, the wretched man next agreed to betray his Master, his Saviour and his God, into the hands of his blood-thirsty enemies, for the miserable bribe of thirty pieces of silver. Leading a band of ruffians into the Garden of Olives, where our Blessed Redeemer was weeping for the sins of men at the silent hour of night, Judas, with bare-faced effrontery, went up to our Lord and saluted him with a kiss; having previously warned the Jews, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, hold him fast."† Wounded to the heart by this base ingratitude, on the part of one whom he had so highly favoured, our Blessed Lord tenderly reproached him in these touching words, "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"‡ After his innocent victim had been condemned to death, the unhappy Judas, stung with remorse, and yielding to despair, put an end to his wicked life by hanging himself with a halter.

See, my dear children, the terrible consequences of venial sin, unchecked and unrepented. His love of money made Judas dishonest, first in little things, then in greater. He became a confirmed thief, a hypocrite, a dissembler. He next became a traitor and a murderer—the murderer of his Saviour and his God. Finally, he became his own murderer, and died in despair.

## TWENTIETH INSTRUCTION.

*Eleventh Article. The Resurrection of the body.*

*Twelfth Article. Life Everlasting. The joys of heaven. The torments of hell.*

Q. What is the eleventh article of the Creed?

A. The resurrection of the body.

\* John xii. 5, &c.

† Matt. xxvi. 48.

‡ Luke xxii. 48.

Q. What means the resurrection of the body ?

A. That we shall all rise again with the same bodies at the day of judgment.

The eleventh article of the Apostles' Creed is the *Resurrection of the body*, by which we mean *that we shall all rise again with the same bodies at the day of general judgment*. Until that day our bodies will lie buried in the earth, and our souls only will, for the time, receive the reward or punishment of their good or evil deeds ; but at the last day the body will be again united to the soul, and share for all eternity in its reward or punishment. No matter where our bodies shall then be, whether buried in the earth, crumbled to dust, reduced to ashes, or sunk in the depths of the sea, in a moment, at the sound of the trumpet of the great Archangel, they will return to life, and be gathered together before the judgment-seat of God in the valley of Josaphat.

But though we shall all rise again in the same bodies, yet our bodies will not then have the same look and appearance that they have now. Now, it often happens that a handsome and well-formed body conceals a loathsome and ugly soul, the abode of sin and of unclean spirits ; while, on the contrary, an ugly and deformed body frequently hides a soul that is beautiful in the sight of God and his Angels, and in which God himself delights to dwell. But at the day of judgment it will not be so any longer. The form and outward appearance of the body will then show forth clearly the state of the soul. For the bodies of the good will be beautiful, glorious, and resplendent with light, while the bodies of the wicked will be ugly, deformed, and frightful to behold. The former will charm and delight every one that beholds them, the latter will fill the spectator with horror and disgust.

Oh! my dear children, which do you choose to have at the day of judgment and for all eternity—a body filthy, ugly and loathsome, or one beautiful, brilliant and glorified? The latter, I know, but if so, you must keep your body and soul free from the defilement of sin, for as the body is on earth the partner of the soul in its good and evil deeds, so shall it be for all eternity a partner of its glory or of its disgrace and punishment.

The Apostle St. Paul, in answer to those who ask, in a spirit of incredulity, how it is that “the dead rise again, or with what manner of body they come,” beautifully compares the human body to a grain of wheat, which does not show signs of life until it is first sown or buried in the ground. In a little time the Power of God causes it to spring from the earth, to put out its leaves and stem, and to grow up, watered by the dew of heaven, and warmed by the rays of the sun, until at length it produces the beautiful ear of corn, which, at a proper season, is reaped and gathered into the granary. “So also,” says the Apostle, “is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying which is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?*”\*

How consoling, my dear children, are these beautiful words of St. Paul! When we look at it with the eyes of a Christian, that death, which we so much dread, is to the soul that loves God, only the gate into another and happier life, the pledge of a glorious resurrection. The bodies of our parents

\* I. Cor. xv. 35, &c.

or dear departed friends, which we follow to the tomb with sorrowful hearts and weeping eyes, are only laid therein to arise one day from thence glorious and immortal, if at least they have died in the grace of God. Hence it is that the Catholic Church shows such respect to the tombs and cemeteries of the dead, blesses and consecrates them with so many beautiful ceremonies, plants on each grave the cross, the symbol of hope, and encourages the living to visit often and deck with flowers and garlands the tombs of their departed friends, and especially to offer up their prayers for the dead on the very spot where their bodies await the moment of their final resurrection.

The holy prophet Ezechiel, one of the Jews who were carried by Nabuchodonosor captives to Babylon, was favoured by God with a wonderful vision, which is a striking figure of the resurrection of all mankind at the last day.

#### THE VISION OF EZECHIEL.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me," says the prophet, "and brought me forth in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of a plain that was full of bones. And he led me about through them on every side; now they were very many upon the face of the plain, and they were exceeding dry.

"And he said to me, *Son of man, dost thou think these bones shall live?* And I answered, *O Lord God, thou knowest.* And he said to me, *Prophecy concerning these bones, and say to them, 'Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God to these bones, Behold I will send spirit into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will cover you with skin; and I will give you spirit, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'*

"And I prophesied as he had commanded me, and the spirit came into them, and they lived; and they stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army. And he said to me, *Son of man, all these bones are the house of Israel.*"—*Ezech. xxxvii.*

Q. What is the twelfth article of the Creed?

A. Life everlasting.

Q. What means this article?

A. That the good shall live for ever happy in heaven.

The twelfth and last article of the Apostles' Creed is *Life everlasting*, by which we mean, as the catechism says, *that the good shall live for ever happy in heaven*. This article is placed the last in the Creed, inasmuch as "Life everlasting" is the reward of our belief and the crown of our labours on earth. This short life is, indeed, only a preparation for the long and eternal life on which we shall soon enter. The few years of this mortal life will pass quickly away, but the life which is to come will have no end. In fact, it is for this eternal life that God has made us, and he has only placed us here, as he placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Paradise, to make trial of us, and fit us for the life which is to come. It is by our conduct here that our future lot will be decided. If we lead good and innocent lives, we shall live for ever with Almighty God, enjoying all the delights of heaven; but if we feed on the forbidden fruit of sin, we shall live only to be punished with the wicked in the flames of hell.

But though all who die in the grace of God will for ever enjoy the happiness of heaven, and all who die in grievous sin will be for ever tormented in hell, do not imagine, my dear children, that all who are saved will be rewarded alike, or that all who are lost will be punished with the same amount of torments. The joys of the Blessed and the punishment of the damned will be in proportion to the number and greatness of their good or evil deeds. Hence the Apostle St. Paul says, "He that soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and he who soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings," \* that is to say, an

\* II Cor. ix. 6,

abundance of heavenly joys. And in another place, speaking of the glory of the heavenly citizens, he says, "One is the glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and another of the stars." \* On the contrary, the Scripture tells us that "the mighty," that is, those who abuse their power and high position "shall be mightily tormented," † in other words, more grievously than the rest of men.

Q. What is the happiness of heaven?

A. To see, love, and enjoy God for evermore.

Yes, my dear children, the happiness of heaven consists in *seeing*, *loving*, and *enjoying* God, and that *for all eternity*.

First we shall *see* God. No human eye has yet beheld Almighty God, for the weakness of our human nature could not support the splendour and glory of his presence. Hence, as you have read in your sacred history, when God has wished at different times to make his will known to men, he has always concealed from their eyes his Infinite Majesty and Splendour, which only the Saints and Angels in heaven are permitted to behold. Thus, when he spoke to Moses in the desert, it was from the midst of a burning bush; ‡ and when he appeared from King Solomon the magnificent temple, which he had built in His honour, he appeared under the form of a bright cloud which filled the interior of that holy place. § But it will not be so hereafter, if we have the happiness to be among the number of the saved. Then we shall behold God as he is, and shall for ever feast our eyes on his incomparable beauty. Hence the Apostle St. Paul says, "We now see through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face." || And oh, how ravishing will not the sight of Him be, who is Beauty and Loveliness itself! For all that we see

\* I. Cor. xv. 41. † Wisd. vi. 7.

‡ Exod. iii. 2. § III. Kings viii. 10. || I. Cor. xiii. 12.

in this world that can charm the eye or delight the senses, is but a spark or a ray of that Infinite Beauty who has made them what they are, and who must infinitely surpass in loveliness the creatures which he has made. Hence it is that, though the beauties of the creation, the green fields and verdant woods, the smiling vallies and the lofty mountains, the sparkling ocean and the blue sky, spangled with millions of bright stars,—though these and other objects may serve to remind us of the Infinite Beauty of the God who made them, yet they can never give us a just idea of his Loveliness, which as far surpasses what we admire in them, as heaven exceeds earth, and God his creatures. Add to this, that, as all things are in God, whoever beholds God will behold in him whatever is beautiful or lovely in his creatures, particularly the incomparable splendour of the sacred humanity of Jesus, the surpassing loveliness of Mary his Blessed Mother, and the beauty and glory of the Saints and Heavenly Spirits. And what must not be the splendour and magnificence of the heavenly Jerusalem, that happy city where God will dwell with his chosen ones! The Apostle St. John, who was permitted to behold it in a vision, to give us some idea of it, says, that the city is of pure gold, the gates of pearls, and the walls of precious stones.\* But even the inspired words of an evangelist can give us but a faint idea of the glory and beauty of that happy abode.

In the second place, we shall not only *see* Almighty God in heaven, we shall also *love* and *enjoy* him. In other words, we shall both love and possess him, and possessing him, our hearts will be so filled with joy and gladness, that we shall desire nothing more. We shall then have attained to the end for which God made us, and in which alone our hearts can find

\* Apoc. xxi.

perfect rest. For all the pleasures of the world can never satisfy our hearts or make us truly happy. They please us but for a moment, and then they leave behind a weariness of soul and a desire of something more; but when we shall possess Almighty God, every desire will be satisfied. In possessing Him we shall possess everything, and in the enjoyment of Him our souls will be ravished with every delight and with the purest joys, in comparison with which all the pleasures of this world will appear empty and worthless. Hence the holy Psalmist David cries out:

“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord; they shall praise thee for ever and ever. Better is one day in thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.” \*

And the Apostle St. Paul, who had been raised up to the third heaven by Almighty God, on witnessing the glory of the Saints, exclaims:

“Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.” †

Finally, what will complete the happiness of the Blessed is, that all this joy, and rapture, and delight will be theirs *for evermore*. No fear now of losing Almighty God by sin; no danger of sorrow, or pain, or sickness, coming in to check their happiness, or draw the tear of sorrow from their eyes. For

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.” ‡

Oh, my dear children, how little are all the trials, and labours, and sufferings of this short life in comparison with the eternal joys of heaven, which we purchase thereby!

\* Ps. lxxxiii.

† I. Cor. ii. 9.

‡ Apoc. xxi. 4.

## THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD.

And after six days, Jesus taketh unto him Peter, and James, and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as snow. And behold ! there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking to him.

And Peter, answering, said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias."

And as he was yet speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo ! a voice out of the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

And the disciples, hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came, and touched them, and said to them, "Arise and fear not." And they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus.—*Matt. xvii.*

## ST. TERESA'S VISION OF OUR LORD.

We read in the life of St. Teresa that, when our Blessed Lord favoured her with the sight of his Sacred Body, he did not do so all at once, but by degrees, as otherwise she would not have been able to bear the glory and delight of his presence. His Sacred Hands, which he first showed her, were so exceedingly beautiful, that she declares herself unable to describe them; but when a few days after she beheld his Divine Face, she felt, as it were, transported out of herself with wonder and delight. At length she was permitted to behold the whole of his Glorified Body, which so charmed and enraptured her, that she declares, that if there were no other joy in heaven but that of beholding a glorified body, especially that of our Divine Lord, the happiness of heaven would be immense. "For if," she says, "his Majesty be so great, even when it is represented to us in this world, in that degree which our misery can bear, what will it be when we shall wholly enjoy and possess such a happiness !" — *Life of St. Teresa.*

## THE YOUNG NIVARD.

When the great St. Bernard and his three brothers were about to quit the world in order to serve God in the monastery of Cîteaux, they first repaired to the Castle of Fontaines, to bid adieu to their aged father, and implore his blessing.

As they came out of the gates of the castle, which is situated on the summit of a hill, they saw their little brother Nivard playing with other children of his age. "Good bye, Nivard!" said Guy, the eldest of the brothers; "you will now be your father's heir, and one day master of all you see around. We leave to you all our possessions." "What!" said the child, with a wisdom beyond his years; "you take heaven for yourselves and leave me earth! Assuredly this division is not equal, and I shall very soon follow you." And so indeed he did when he grew older, for he also quitted the world, and, entering the Abbey of Citeaux, put himself under the direction of his brother Bernard.—*Life of St. Bernard.*

#### ST. TERESA AND HER BROTHER RODERICK.

When St. Teresa was a little girl, not more than seven years old, she used to spend much of her time with her little brother Roderick in reading the lives of the Saints and conversing about holy things. The thought of eternity made a deep impression upon their young hearts, and they were never tired of repeating these words, "For ever, for ever, for ever! What! shall the blessed see and enjoy God for ever?" When they read the history of the monks and hermits, they wished, like them, to abandon all for God, and tried to build themselves little hermitages in their father's garden, but, being only small and weak, they were not able to finish them. It was the history of the martyrs, however, which filled them with the greatest delight. It seemed to them that the martyrs had purchased heaven very cheaply, since by short sufferings they had secured eternal joys. They wished that they could do the same, and one day set out privately from home and left the city, intending to make their way to the country of the Moors, where they hoped to be martyred for the faith. As they went along, praying with great fervour, they were met by one of their uncles, and by him brought back to their mother, who was in a state of the greatest distress at their unexpected absence. Teresa did not escape without a scolding for what she had done, for Roderick laid all the blame on his little sister; but Almighty God was, no doubt, pleased with her innocent fervour. Though prevented from aspiring to the crown of martyrdom, she continued to devote herself with more zeal than ever to the service of God, animating herself with these words, *Eternity, eternity!* This thought of eternity was like the good seed spoken of in the Gospel, which produced a hundred fold in her future life.—*Life of St. Teresa.*

Let us, my dear children, plant in our hearts the same good seed which made the little Teresa grow into a saint—*Eternity! Eternity!* Whisper to yourselves, when you lie on your beds at night, or when you find yourselves tempted to sin, “If I live well, I shall be happy with God for ever. If I live badly, I shall burn for ever with the devils in the flames of hell.”

Q. And shall not the wicked also live for ever?

A. They shall live and be punished for ever in the flames of hell.

The wicked “*shall live and be punished for ever in the flames of hell.*” Their life also will be eternal, but it will not be *life* so much as a living death. They shall live, it is true, both body and soul, but only that every power of the soul, and every limb, and sense, and member of the body, may be tormented for all eternity in the flames of hell. Hence the Holy Scripture calls the punishment of hell *the second death*; the unbelievers, and murderers, and idolaters, and impure, “shall have their portion,” it says, “in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is *the second death.*” \*

But what, my dear children, will be the nature of the torments which the damned will endure for all eternity in the prison-house of hell? Our Blessed Lord has revealed them to us in part, but in part only; for as it “hath not entered into the heart to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love him,” so neither is it possible for man to understand the greatness of the torments which the Infinite Justice of God has prepared in hell for those who outrage and insult him by grievous sin. We know, however, from the words of our Blessed Redeemer

\* Apoc. xxi. 8.

himself, that hell is "a place of torments," \* in other words, a place set apart for every kind of suffering; that it is an "everlasting -fire," the abode of the devil and the wicked angels; † moreover, that it is a dungeon of utter "darkness," "where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" ‡ and, finally, that it is a place of continual suffering, where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished." § From these terrible words of our Blessed Lord, we may conclude that in hell both body and soul will be alike tormented; that the body will be cast into a raging fire, kindled by the just anger of God, which will for ever burn without consuming it, and that the soul will become a prey to the most bitter anguish and remorse, and will waste herself for all eternity in unavailing fury and despair. "The wicked shall see and shall be angry," says holy David; "he shall gnash with his teeth and pine away: the desire of the wicked shall perish." ||

Oh, my dear children, let me ask of you, in the words of Holy Scripture, "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" ¶ And which of you would choose the cruel and ugly devils to be your inseparable companions for eternity? None of you, willingly. Flee, then, from mortal sin as you would from hell itself, for he that commits mortal sin is already a child of hell.

#### DIVES AND LAZARUS.

There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

\* Luke xvi. 28.      † Matt. xxv. 41.      ‡ Ib. 30.      § Mark ix. 45.

|| Ps. cxi. 10.

¶ Is. xxxiii. 14.

And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died, and he was buried in hell.

And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

And Abraham said to him, "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos, so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither."

And he said, "Then, father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments."

And Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

But he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead, they would do penance."

And he said to him, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead.—*Luke xvi.*

#### WHICH THE GREATER FOOL?

Many years ago there was a certain lord who kept a fool in his house, as many great men did in those days for their amusement. Now this lord had given the fool a staff, and charged him to keep it, till he met with one that was a greater fool than himself, bidding him, if he met with such a one, to deliver the staff to him. Not many years after, the lord fell sick, and indeed was sick unto death. His fool came to see him, and the sick lord told him that he must shortly leave him. "And where art thou going?" said the fool. "Into another world," said the lord. "And when wilt thou return; in a month?" "No," said the lord. "In a year?" "No." "When, then?" "Never, never!" "And what provision hast thou made," said the fool, "for thy entertainment in the place where thou art going?" "Alas! none at all." "What?" said the fool, "none at all? Here, take my staff. Art thou going to dwell there for ever, and hast made no orders for thy entertainment in a place from which thou wilt

never return? Take my staff, for I am not guilty of any such folly as this."—*Catholic Weekly Instructor*.

#### NOBLE ANSWER OF SIR THOMAS MORE.

When Sir Thomas More, the learned and pious chancellor of England, had been condemned to death by King Henry VIII. for refusing to acknowledge the King's supremacy, he was visited before his execution by his wife Louisa, who with prayers and tears besought him to yield, assuring him that the King would in that case consent to spare his life. "Tell me, Louisa," said the noble confessor of the faith, "how many years could I, who am an old man, expect to live?" "You might live," she answered, "for as many as twenty years." "Oh foolish woman," replied her husband; "and do you want me for twenty years of this miserable life on earth to forfeit an eternity of happiness, and condemn myself to an eternity of torments?"—*Life of Sir Thomas More*.

## TWENTY-FIRST INSTRUCTION.

CHAPTER III.—*The Lord's Prayer. Grace. Its necessity and nature. Means of obtaining it. Prayer. Its nature and conditions.*

Q. Will faith alone save us?

A. No, it will not, without good works.

You have now learnt, my dear children, in the first part of the catechism, the principal articles of your faith, that is to say, the chief things which you must believe in order to be saved. But you remember that, besides *believing* in God, you must also *hope* in him and *love* him. For when I asked you what you must do to save your soul, you answered me, in the words of your catechism, "I must worship God

by faith, hope, and charity, that is, I must *believe* in him, *hope* in him, and *love* him with my whole heart.

We come, therefore, now to the second part of the catechism, which teaches you how to *hope* in God, or, in other words, in what manner you are to show your confidence and trust in him. This you do by praying to him and going to the holy Sacraments. Later on you will see how you are to *love* him, when we come to speak of the commandments; for our love of God is shown by the keeping of his commandments.\* You now see why it is that the chapter of the catechism which explains the Apostles' Creed, has the word *Faith* as its heading, while that which speaks of Prayer is headed *Hope*, and that which treats of the Commandments is headed *Charity* or the love of God.

The catechism here tells us, that *faith alone without good works*, is not sufficient to save us. In other words, we must *hope* in God and *love* him, as well as *believe* in him. Moreover, we must show our hope and our love by the devout use of Prayer and the Sacraments, and the keeping of his Divine Commandments. It is these which are the good works that are here spoken of. The so-called reformers, headed by Luther, the founder of the Protestants, taught that faith, or believing only, is sufficient for salvation—a very easy doctrine, but a very false and pernicious one. For Jesus Christ himself says, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments,”† and in another place he says, that at the last day “he will render to every man according to his works.”‡ Hence the Apostle St. James says, that “Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself;”§ and to show us clearly that faith alone is not sufficient to save us, he adds, “Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble. But

\* I John v. 3. † Matt. xix. 17. ‡ Matt. xvi. 27. § James ii. 17.

wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead. For even as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”\*

Notice these last words of St. James, my dear children: “Even as the body,” &c. What does the Apostle mean by the body without the spirit? He means a body out of which the soul is gone out. Have any of you seen such a body? Yes, if you have seen a dead person; for our soul or spirit goes out of our body when we die. Of what use is our body, then? Can it move, can it speak, can it see? No, you know that it cannot. You know that it is a dull, useless lump of flesh, and that even our dearest friends soon want to get rid of it, and take and bury it in the ground. Even so is faith without good works. Good works are to faith what the soul is to the body. They give it life, and beauty, and value in the sight of God; whereas faith without good works is *dead*, that is to say, vain and utterly worthless before God. It is St. James that tells you so. “Even as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.”

Our Blessed Lord, in several of his beautiful parables, has explained to us the necessity of labouring by the practice of good works to secure our eternal salvation. Listen, and I will relate to you the parable of the ten talents.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE TEN TALENTS.

A man going into a far country, called his servants, and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability; and immediately he took his journey.

And he that had received the five talents went his way, and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner, he that had received the two gained other two.

\* James ii. 19, 20, 26.

But he that had received the one, going his way, digged into the earth, and hid his lord's money.

But after a long time the lord of those servants came and reckoned with them. And he, that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying, "Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five over and above." His lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord." And he also, that had received the two talents, came and said, "Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me; behold, I have gained other two." His lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

But he that had received the one talent came and said, "Lord, I know that thou art a hard man; thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And, being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth; behold, here thou hast that which is thine."

And his lord, answering, said to him, "Wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed. Thou oughtest therefore to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury. Take ye away, therefore, the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also, which he seemeth to have, shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—*Matt. xxv.*

Q. Can we of ourselves do any good work towards our salvation?

A. No; we cannot without the help of God's grace.

Of ourselves, my dear children, we cannot do any good work towards our eternal salvation; it is necessary for this that we should be assisted and supported by God himself. It is He that must put the good act in our mind: it is He that must help us to begin it, to continue it, and to complete it. This help which God gives us, is called his *grace*, and it is so necessary for us that the Apostle St. Paul

says, that we cannot even say the holy name of Jesus, in such a way as will please Almighty God, except by the grace of the Holy Ghost. "No man can say the Lord Jesus except by the Holy Ghost."\* All that we do without the grace of God is only *human*, because it is the act of mere man, unassisted by God, and therefore it can only obtain a human reward, that is a reward in this world. For example, if you give a penny to a poor man, merely because you pity him, without a thought of God, and without God helping you by a special grace to do that good work, it is a mere human act, and the reward will only be a human or temporal one. But when Almighty God helps you to perform a good act, you see it becomes more than a human act; it is a *Divine* act as well, because God has helped you by his grace to do it. The reward of such an act is eternal; it is laid up for you in heaven, and you will receive the recompense of it on that great day of the General Judgment, when God will render to every man according to his works.†

Q. What is grace?

A. Grace is a supernatural gift of God, freely bestowed upon us for our sanctification and salvation.

As God's grace is so necessary for us, it is of great importance that we should understand properly what it is, and how we are to get it. I told you just now that it is the help which God gives us to do good actions. It is called *grace*, because it is a favour of God which we have no right or title to; for the word *grace* is taken from a Latin word meaning "favour." For the same reason, the catechism says that *grace is a gift of God*, which is *freely bestowed upon us*; that is to say, God gives it us of his own free Goodness, and without our being able of ourselves to deserve it.

\* I. Cor. xii. 3.

† Matt. xvi. 27.

But why is it, my dear children, that it is called a *supernatural* gift of God? What is the meaning of that long, hard word, *supernatural*? It only means "that which is *above* our nature," just as the word "unnatural" means that which is against the feelings of our nature, and "natural" what belongs to our nature. But I will explain this to you a little more simply; for the word "*supernatural*" is one which you will often hear when you are being instructed in your catechism, and once well learnt, it is learnt for ever.

You know, first of all, what your nature consists of. It consists, as I once told you, of a body and soul, and it is called the human nature or the nature of man. There are other natures besides your own; there is the nature of the Angels, which consists of a spirit only, and the nature of the animals, which consists of a body only, with life. Almighty God, then, having given you the nature of man, has given you certain gifts which belong to your nature, such as sight, hearing, free will, understanding, &c. These gifts, as they belong to and are a part of your nature, are called *natural* gifts. But there are other gifts, which God sometimes gives to man, which do not belong to our nature, but are far above it, and these are called *supernatural*, that is to say, "more than natural" gifts. The power of working miracles, which the Apostles and many Saints had, was a *supernatural* gift, because it is not in the nature of man to work a miracle. If we come one day to see and enjoy God in heaven, that will be a *supernatural* gift, because it is not in the nature of man to see and possess Almighty God. Neither is it in the nature of man himself to be able to please God, and, therefore, if God helps us to do so, he gives us a *supernatural* gift, namely, his grace, which helps and enables us to do good actions, and thus to please

him. And those good actions which we do by means of this help, are called *supernatural* actions, because they are above the power of our nature, and we are not able to perform them without God's assistance. You see, my dear children, from this, how necessary grace is to enable us to please Almighty God, and why it is called a *supernatural gift of God*.

But why is it, and for what purpose, that God gives us this great and supernatural gift of his grace? Your catechism tells you that it is *for our sanctification and salvation*. Here are two more words which sound long and hard; but do not be discouraged, they have a very easy meaning. *For our sanctification* means "to sanctify or make us holy," and *for our salvation* only means "to save us." God gives us his grace, then, to make us good and holy, and thus to save us. Without his grace we can neither be good, nor can we ever enter heaven.

I will now tell you over again, in a few easy words, the meaning of this answer.

Grace is a gift of God, which is above the power of our human nature, and which God gives us, of his own free Goodness, to make us holy and so to save us.

But does God give grace to every one, do you think? Yes, most certainly, because he wishes every one to be saved, and he knows that we cannot be saved without it. In his Infinite Goodness, he often gives us graces and helps when we have little reason to expect them; but, generally speaking, he requires that we should make use of the means which he has given us to obtain them. For if we expected that God would help us to get to heaven without our taking the proper means to obtain his assistance, it would not be any longer the virtue of hope; it would be the sin of presumption.

Q. How may we obtain God's grace?

A. By prayer and the holy sacraments.

What, then, are the means which Almighty God has given us to enable us to get his grace or assistance? They are principally these two, *Prayer and the Holy Sacraments*. The source or fountain of all grace is the Passion of our Blessed Lord, and the Precious Blood which he has shed for our salvation. For we cannot, of ourselves, *deserve* any grace, though we can *obtain* it, with God's help, by taking the means which our Blessed Lord has given us. These means are Prayer and the Holy Sacraments.

You sometimes hear foolish people try to excuse themselves for committing sin by saying that they could not help it. A boy gets in a passion and calls names because another boy hits him. He says, "I could not help getting in a passion and calling names, for I was provoked to it." A little girl sees some nice preserves in the pantry, and takes a bit. She says, "I could not help taking a bit, it looked so nice." A working man curses and swears at every little thing. He says, "I know it is a bad thing to do, but I cannot help it, for I have got a habit of it." My dear children, all these people tell lies,—yes, downright lies. They *can* help it, if they like, for the grace of God would make them able to overcome that temptation, that passion, that bad habit, and they can get his grace at any time *by Prayer and the Holy Sacraments*. You see, therefore, that whoever is lost at the last day, is lost by the neglect, and whoever is saved, is saved by the good use of Prayer and the Sacraments.

We come now to speak of the first of these two great means of obtaining the grace of God, namely, *Prayer*; for the Sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is another abundant means of grace, will be explained in a later chapter. Prayer

is explained first, because it is suited to all times, to all persons, and to all places ; whereas we cannot always be hearing Mass or going to the Sacraments, but only when we have a fitting opportunity. It often happens, however, that, when we are at a distance from a church or have no such opportunity, we find ourselves in great need of the Divine assistance,—for example, when we are exposed to a violent temptation. What, then, must we do ? Our Blessed Lord has told us. “ Ask,” he says, “ and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” \* You see, then, that our Good Lord has provided us with an unfailing resource in all our wants, that is, Prayer ; promising, moreover, on his Divine word, that he will always grant us what we ask, provided that we pray with proper dispositions. Let us now do our best to understand all about Prayer, which is so great and so necessary a means of salvation.

Q. What is prayer ?

A. It is the raising up of our minds and hearts to God.

Q. How do we raise up our minds and hearts to God ?

A. By thinking of God, by adoring and praising Him, and by begging of Him all blessings for soul and body.

Prayer, my dear children, is the first duty of every Christian. It is a special command of Almighty God ; but besides that, it is a great privilege, a high honour, and an immense advantage to us to be allowed to speak so freely to the Divine Majesty. The kings of this earth, as St. Teresa beautifully observes,† do not allow their subjects to approach to their person, or to make known their petitions to them, except through their nobles and officers of

\* Matt. vii. 7, 8.

† See *Anima Divota*.

state; but *we* may at all times approach to the King of heaven, adore him, thank him for his goodness, and lay open to him all our wants, both for soul and body. And what is the most consoling is, that he is always glad to receive us, ready to hear us, and willing and able to help us; whereas earthly kings sometimes receive the petitions of their subjects with a very bad grace, and very often refuse them. But, in order that we may be always heard by Almighty God when we pray, we must pray in a becoming manner and with proper disposition. For the Apostle St. James says to certain persons who do not pray well, and so do not get what they ask, "You ask and you receive not, because you ask amiss."\* Attend, then, while I explain to you what prayer is, and in what manner you must pray in order to be *heard*, that is, to have your prayers granted by Almighty God.

What, then, is prayer? It is, as your catechism says, *the raising of the mind and heart to God*. It is the mind which thinks, it is the heart which hopes and loves. Prayer, therefore, consists in thinking of God, in hoping in him, and loving him. You see, from this that it is not strictly necessary to say any words when we pray. If we only think of God in our minds and love him with our hearts, we make a good prayer, though we do not say a single word.

Your catechism says that you raise your minds and hearts to God *by thinking of God, by adoring and praising him, and by begging of him all blessings for soul and body*. This is just the same as what I have told you. You raise your minds to God by thinking of him, and your hearts by adoring him, praising him, and asking his blessings, for these are different ways of showing your love to him and your confidence in his Goodness. Thus, when you *adore*

\* James iv. 3.

or worship God, you do so because you know him to be your Lord and Maker, and wish to show that you acknowledge and love him as such. When you praise and bless him, it is because you love him for his infinite perfections, and desire to show your gratitude for his past goodness. And when you *beg blessings* from him, it is because you hope and trust in One so good and so well able to assist you. Thus you see that prayer consists in thinking of God, in hoping in him, and loving him.

#### ST. IGNATIUS AND THE CARRIER.

It is related in the life of St. Ignatius that, being at one time on a journey with some of his pious companions, they hired a peasant to carry their baggage, for they were travelling on foot. Their carrier proved to be a very ignorant and also a very impatient and passionate man; and, when first the good priests hired him, he was much addicted to cursing and swearing, so that they had frequently occasion to reprove and exhort him. Whenever these holy men arrived at an inn, the first thing they did, after hiring a room for themselves and the carrier, was to retire into a corner to pray. In the meantime, the carrier generally slept on a bench or sat warming himself by the fire. After some time, however, observing the heavenly countenances of these holy men while thus employed, and beginning to think that it might be because they prayed so devoutly that they were so good to every one and so happy and cheerful in the midst of difficulties and privations, he determined to try to do as they did, and, kneeling down at a distance from them, remained in that posture till they rose up to pursue their journey. Having continued this practice for some time, the carrier seemed to every one to be changed into another man, for he became sober, civil, patient, and obliging. The good religious with reason attributed this happy change to the help which he must have obtained from God since he applied himself to prayer; but, wishing to satisfy themselves further, they one day asked him what prayers he said. "You know that I cannot read," replied the carrier, "neither have I been taught how to pray; but this is what I say to God when I see you praying: 'Lord, I am a poor ignorant man, and I know not how to serve you; but what these holy men are doing, I at

least desire to do.'” The good missionaries were much edified by the reply of the peasant, and returned thanks to God, to whom a hearty, good will is more acceptable than the finest language.—*The Diurnal of the Soul.*

#### THE PIOUS LABOURER.

In the parish of Ars, in the time of its saintly curé or parish priest, John Baptist Vianney, lived a simple peasant, poor in the goods of this world and ignorant of its learning, but rich in piety and virtue. He was particularly remarkable for his ardent devotion to our Blessed Lord in the most holy Sacrament. Whether going to his work or returning from it, never did that good man pass the church door without entering it to adore his Lord. He would leave his tools, his spade, hoe, and pickaxe at the door, and remain for hours together sitting or kneeling before the tabernacle. The holy curé, who watched him with great delight, could never perceive the slightest movement of the lips. Being surprised at this circumstance, he said to him one day, “My good father, what do you say to our Lord in those long visits you pay him every day?” “I say nothing to him,” was the reply; “I look at him and he looks at me.”—*Life of the Curé of Ars.*

A beautiful and sublime answer. He said nothing, he opened no book; he could not read, but he had eyes—eyes of the body and eyes of the soul, and he opened them, the eyes of the soul especially, and fixed them on our Lord. “I look at him.” He fastened upon him his whole mind, his whole heart, his memory, his understanding, all his senses, all his affections. Then our Blessed Lord looked at him in return, for there were streams of Divine love and of Divine Grace flowing from the heart of the master into the heart of the servant. This is the secret of becoming Saints. To be Saints is to form the image of Jesus Christ within us; and to form his image within us, what must we do? We must look at him often and look at him long, for the more we look at him the more we shall love him, and the more we love him the more we shall be led to imitate him.\*

\* Remarks of the Biographer.

Q. Do those pray well who at their prayers think not of God or of what they say?

A. No; if their distractions are wilful, they do not pray well, but they offend God.

Almighty God has promised always to hear our prayers, if they are offered to him with proper dispositions; but he has not promised to hear our prayers if they are said badly, that is, without the dispositions which he requires. But what are the dispositions which God requires? The first is spoken of in this question and answer of your catechism. It is *Attention*, which means, that we must think of God when we pray, and attend to what we are saying. For if we are thinking of idle and trifling things at a time when we are speaking to Almighty God in prayer, it is plain that we are treating him with great disrespect; and such prayers, as your catechism says, instead of pleasing God, are more likely to offend him. These idle thoughts, which the devil puts into our minds in time of prayer, are called *distractions*; and if they are *wilful*, that is, indulged in of our own accord, they displease God, spoil our prayer, and are a sin, of which we should accuse ourselves in confession. Far worse is it, if we talk or play at our prayers, for this is a still greater act of disrespect to God; and, besides, it is a sin of scandal, since it is the means of leading others into the same sin as ourselves. What would you think, my dear children, if a person were to ask to be allowed to speak to the Queen, and, when she had kindly consented and he was brought into her presence, were to turn his back upon her, and to begin to laugh and talk to some one else in the room? You would say that such a person would deserve to be driven in disgrace from the Queen's presence, to be severely punished, and never to be allowed to come near her Majesty any more. And

yet this is what that child does who laughs and talks with his companion, when he is allowed to speak in prayer to the great God of heaven, in comparison with whom any earthly king or queen is as a speck of dust. You see, then, how necessary it is to pray with *attention*, in order to please God and obtain what you ask.

But it sometimes happens, when we kneel down to our prayers, that a great many idle thoughts come to our mind, and, though we try to do our best to put them away and attend to our prayers, still we are not able to do so, and our thoughts continue to wander in spite of all our efforts. Do we commit any sin in that case, and is our prayer spoilt? No, my dear children, for such distractions as these are not wilful, because they are not indulged in on purpose, and hence they do not offend God or spoil our prayer. It is not necessary, therefore, to accuse ourselves in confession of such distractions as these, because they are no sin, but only of those distractions which we have given way to on purpose, or not tried to put away when we noticed them.

But is it sufficient, you will ask, to pray with *attention*, or are there other dispositions necessary in order to be sure of having our prayers granted by Almighty God? Yes, there are four other dispositions necessary, though they are not mentioned in your catechism. I will, however, tell you them in short.

The second disposition necessary to make our prayer pleasing to God is *Humility*. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself," says the wise man, "shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart till the Most High behold." \* And again, we read in the Holy Scriptures, "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." †

\* Ecclus. xxxv. 21.

† James iv. 6.

The third disposition is *Confidence* in the Divine Goodness and the Power of God to grant our requests. "All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you."\* These are the words of our Blessed Lord himself.

The fourth disposition is *Conformity to God's Will*. We must be resigned to God's Will, if he does not think fit to give us exactly the thing we ask, knowing that if he sees that what we ask will be hurtful to us, he will be sure to give us something which is really for our good. "Which of you," said our Blessed Lord to his disciples, "if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or, if he ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give the good spirit to them that ask him!"†

The fifth and last disposition necessary is *Perseverance*, or "continuing to pray," for sometimes Almighty God does not grant us our requests at once, in order to try our faith, and that we may acquire fresh merit by the love and confidence we show in repeating them. For as a man, says our Blessed Lord, who asks his neighbour to lend him a loaf will not always get it the first time he asks, but if he continue asking, will in the end get it,—nay, his friend will press it on him in order to be rid of him,—so our Heavenly Father will grant us what we ask if we persevere in prayer, not to be rid of us, indeed, but to reward our humble confidence and perseverance.‡

Listen, my dear children, while I tell you again the conditions which our prayer must have in order to be sure to be heard by Almighty God. They

\* Mark xi. 24. † Luke xi. 11—13. ‡ Luke xi. 5, &c.

are five:—Attention, Humility, Confidence in God's Goodness and Power, Conformity to his Will, and Perseverance.

#### ST. BERNARD AND THE COUNTRYMAN.

St. Bernard was one day travelling with a poor, simple countryman, who, noticing that the holy man kept his eyes modestly cast down on the ground during the journey, asked him why he did not look around at the country. The saint answered that it was to avoid distractions in time of prayer. "Well," said the countryman, "when I pray I pray, and when I walk I look about." "Have you, then, no distractions at your prayers?" said St. Bernard. "None at all," answered the countryman. "I do not believe it," said St. Bernard. "Now, let me make a bargain with you; if you can succeed in saying an Our Father without a distraction, I will give you this mule on which I am riding; but if you do not succeed, you will come to Clairvaux and become a monk." The agreement was made, and the countryman began to recite the Our Father, but, after a few words, he interrupted it and said, "Pray, father, will you give me the saddle and bridle too?" "Yes, I should have given you mule, saddle, and bridle," said St. Bernard; "but because you have been distracted, you have lost all, and you must come with me to Clairvaux and become a monk."

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### TWENTY-SECOND INSTRUCTION.

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*The Lord's Prayer. Who made it. Its Division into Seven Parts. The Introduction. First, Second, and Third Petitions.*

Q. Which is the best of all prayers?

A. The Lord's prayer.

Q. Who made this prayer?

A. Christ our Lord.

Of all prayers, my dear children, the Lord's prayer is the best, both because it was made by our Blessed Saviour, and is therefore more pleasing to God than any other form of prayer, and because it is the most beautiful and complete prayer that was ever made, containing, in a very few words, acts of the most perfect virtue and the expression of all our wants. It was given to his disciples by our Blessed Lord himself, in answer to a question addressed to him by one of them, who said to him one day, "Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." Our Blessed Lord, answering, said to them, "When you pray, say—

"Our Father, who art in heaven,

"Hallowed be thy name,

"Thy kingdom come,

"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread,

"And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation,

"But deliver us from evil.

"Amen." \*

From that day to this, the Our Father has been always on the lips of our Blessed Lord's disciples. The Catholic child is taught to utter it as soon as he can lisp; young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, all repeat it at their morning and evening prayers; the priest recites it many times in his daily office, and it forms part of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We must not forget, however, that, in order to say it in a manner that will please Almighty God, we must repeat it with the heart, and not with the lips only. Listen, therefore, attentively while I explain to you the meaning of it, in order that you may understand what you so often

\* Luke xl. 1, &c.; Matt. vi. 9, &c.

repeat, and that, when you say it, the desires of your hearts may go up to the throne of God along with the words of the prayer. But, first, say it for me yourselves slowly and distinctly.

Say the Lord's prayer.

A. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Now that you have repeated the Lord's prayer can you tell me into how many parts it is divided? Yes, into seven. And what are they called? They are called *petitions*, that is to say, requests, which we make of Almighty God, or, in other words, things which we ask for. For the word *petition* means a "request," or "asking for something;" so that, for example, if any of you sent a letter to the Queen to ask her for some favour, I should say that you had sent a petition to her Majesty. But, notice, in the Our Father, before the petitions or requests begin, there is a short address to Almighty God, to show whom we are going to speak to, and to fill our hearts with confidence in his Goodness and Power. This address is as follows:—

"Our Father, who art in heaven."

Then come the petitions. The three first relate to God, and the four last to ourselves and our neighbour. Thus you see, the Our Father is divided into two parts. When we say it together, I say the first three petitions and you the four last.

Before I go on to speak of the meaning of these petitions, I will first of all, explain to you the few words which come at the beginning, "Our Father, who art in heaven."

Q. Who is it that is here called Our Father?

A. God.

You see, then, my dear children, that it is *God* whom we here call by the loving title of "*Father*." This one word is sufficient to fill our hearts with the tenderest love and the most lively confidence. For what have we not to hope for when it is our *Father* we address, and that Father is *Almighty God*? We speak, therefore, to a Father who loves us with an infinite love, and is consequently most *willing* to grant our requests, and who, being the great God of Heaven, is *able* to do for us whatever we ask of him. "Our Father, who art in heaven." In these two words are contained every ground for a Christian's hope. For in asking a favour from any one, on what ground is it that we ever hope to obtain it? It is only because the person we ask is good and willing to grant it, and also because he is able to give it us. If either of these two conditions is wanting, if we know that the person is either not able or not willing to give us what we ask, we do not think it of any use asking him. But when we say the Our Father, there is no room for any doubt of this kind. In the word *Father* we see at once the Fatherly Goodness and Mercy of God; and when we add, *who art in heaven*, we are reminded of his Infinite Wisdom and Power.

Q. Why is He called our Father?

A. Because He made us all, and loves and preserves us all,

It is Almighty God, then, whom we here address by the name of *Father*. But is it true that he is really our Father? Yes, it is most true, otherwise our Blessed Lord would not have bidden us call him so. "When you shall pray, say Our Father," &c. But in what way is it that God is Our Father? In

a thousand ways. The catechism mentions three when it says, *because he made us all, and loves and preserves us all.*

In the first place, it was God *who made us all.* He is, therefore, entitled to the name of Father far more than our earthly father, who has only given us birth, whereas it was God who *made us*, who made our bodies out of the dust of the earth and our souls out of nothing to his own image and likeness.

But if it is true that God is our Father because he made us, has he also a Father's love towards us? Most certainly; nay, *he loves us* infinitely more than any earthly father can possibly love his children. Our earthly father loves us only from the time of our birth, but God loves us from all eternity; "I have loved thee," he says in Holy Scripture, "with an everlasting love."\* Besides, the love of God towards us is far more tender than that of any earthly parent; "He that toucheth you," he says again, "toucheth the apple of my eye,"† that is to say, what is the nearest and dearest to me. For what is there dearer to us than the apple or centre of our eye, on which our sight depends; and what is there that we more readily put up our hand to defend, if we are threatened with a blow? And, in another place, he asks, "Can a mother forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee."‡ Hence one of your hymns beautifully says—

"No earthly father loves like Thee,  
No mother half so mild  
Bears and forbears, as thou hast done,  
With me, thy sinful child."

Finally, Almighty God shows that he is truly our Father by the continual care which he takes of us,

\* Jer. xxxi. 3.

† Zach. ii. 8.

‡ Is. xlix. 15.

*preserving us* from so many dangers and providing for all our wants. It is He that gives us the air we breathe, the sun which warms us, the rains which cause the earth to produce its plentiful harvest, the animals which furnish us at the same time with food and clothing. It is He who has given us a fond earthly father and mother to watch over and provide for us in our infancy, kind friends and relations to love and assist us, masters and mistresses to train and instruct us,—in a word, it is He who has given us everything that we need to supply our wants, whether of soul or body. Oh, my dear children, when we think of all that God has done for us, how much reason have we not to cry out, with hearts beating with love and gratitude, “Our Father, who art in heaven!” And yet the greatest of God’s favours remain to be told.

## DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

The celebrated Father Beauregard had been one day preaching on Divine Providence in one of the churches of Paris, when, at the conclusion of his sermon, he was followed into the vestry by a man, who addressed him as follows:—

“I have been at your sermon, sir, and a very fine one it was; but I cannot see the force of your arguments. In fact, I do not believe that there is a Providence at all, for I receive none of its cares or benefits!”

“What!” said the preacher; “are you, then, an infidel?”

“Ah, father,” said the man, “facts are stubborn things. I and my wife and three children work hard, and we have never injured any one; yet, I am reduced to such distress by the failure of a man who owes me money, that, not able to endure such misery, I have determined to put an end to my life.”

“And how on earth,” said the priest, “did you come to church, if you entertained such a wicked intention as that?”

“I happened to pass by, while the people were going in,” replied the man, “and I followed them.”

“Can you, then, any longer,” said the priest, “think that there is no Providence? What but a special Providence

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could ordain that, on your way to drown yourself, you should enter a church, and hear a discourse so well suited for you, as to induce you to come to the preacher and tell him your troubles?"

"I confess," said the poor man, after a slight pause, "that there is something remarkable in this. Still, I do not see how I am to meet my creditors, to whom I owe £100."

"Listen, my child," said the priest. "I believe you to be sincere, though unfortunate. See, here are £200, which a great lady gave me the other day to be disposed of in charity. Take it, and look upon it as the gift of Divine Providence."

The poor man was deeply affected, acknowledged his fault, and, with a heart overflowing with gratitude to God, returned to console his afflicted family.—*Village Evenings*.

Though the Providence of our Heavenly Father extends over all mankind, yet it is the good and the innocent, and those who cast themselves with a childlike confidence into his Divine Hands, who experience especial marks of his fatherly protection.

Listen to what happened to the great St. Francis of Sales.

#### ST. FRANCIS OF SALES.

This illustrious Saint, having gone in his youth to visit the city of Rome, engaged apartments in a house on the banks of the Tiber, where he placed his luggage and took up his abode. One evening, on returning to his lodging, he found that his rooms had been taken possession of by some newly arrived strangers, to whom the landlord had let them again at a higher rent, in spite of his previous agreement with St. Francis. The servants of the Saint were engaged in an angry dispute with the landlord, whom they reproached for his unmannerly conduct and breach of promise. St. Francis, however, told them at once to give up disputing, and to come with him to seek another lodging. With a very bad grace they obeyed him, but they were not long in perceiving that what had happened was the effect of a special Providence of God, watching over the safety of the holy youth. That very night, the house which they had just left was carried away by the waters of the Tiber, which, swelled by the heavy rains, unexpectedly overflowed their banks. Not a trace of the house remained on the following morning, and all within it perished.

After leaving Rome, St. Francis travelled to the seaport of Ancona, where he found a ship on the point of setting sail for Venice. Finding that the captain was willing to take him on board, he gladly engaged his passage and paid his fare. At the moment of departure, however, a lady of rank made her appearance, and, perceiving St. Francis, who had already taken his place, in an angry tone desired the captain to order him out, as she had engaged the whole vessel for herself and her attendants. Upon this, St. Francis, coming forward, stated his case respectfully to the lady, and begged that he might be allowed to keep his place, as he should not be at all in her way, and was very anxious to pursue his journey. The lady, however, rudely persisted, and almost gave orders to have his luggage thrown overboard. St. Francis submitted to the affront with his usual meekness, and, when the ship set sail, remained on the shore trying to pacify his angry attendants. While he was yet speaking, the clouds gathered, a violent storm arose, and the ill-fated vessel sank before their eyes, with every soul on board, at the very entrance of the harbour.—*Life of St. Francis of Sales.*

**Q.** Is He especially the Father of Christians?

**A.** Yes; because by baptism he has made us His children in Jesus Christ.

We have seen, my dear children, in the last answer, how Almighty God is truly the Father of all mankind, since he created us all to his image, loves us with the tenderest love, and ever watches over and preserves us. But those who have received the Sacrament of Baptism are in a special manner his children, since by that Sacrament he has solemnly adopted us as such, and given us his own Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be our brother; wherefore your catechism says, *by baptism he has made us his children in Jesus Christ.*

By this holy Sacrament of Baptism, then, which is like a second birth, we have recovered those privileges, as children of God, which our first parents lost by sin. For though man may, as the creature of God enjoying the continual care of his tender Providence, be truly called the child of God, yet by sin he rebelled

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against his Heavenly Father, renounced his birth-right, and could never, unredeemed, have hoped for pardon or re-admittance to his Father's house. Now this mercy our good God has shown us by sending into the world his only Son our Lord Jesus Christ, by the merits of whose Precious Blood we are cleansed from our sins in the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, adopted once more as children by our Heavenly Father, and restored to our right and title to our forfeited inheritance, the eternal kingdom of heaven. By this merciful adoption we are once more able to call our good God by the sweet name of Father, wherefore our Blessed Lord says, "When you pray, you shall pray thus, "*Our Father*, who art in heaven." Oh, my dear children, how much reason have we not to bless and thank God for this glorious privilege! For if it be esteemed a high honour upon earth and a great piece of good fortune to be born the son or daughter of an earthly king, how much more happy are we in being born by Baptism children of the great King of Kings, the Lord of Heaven and earth!

Q. Why do we say *Our Father*, and not *My Father*?

A. Because we are not to pray for ourselves only, but for all others.

Yes, *we are not to pray for ourselves only, but for all others*; and why so? Because we are to love our neighbour as ourselves; and, therefore, when we pray for our own wants, we should pray for theirs also. This charity to our neighbour is, as our Blessed Lord said it should be, the mark of a true Christian, for there can be nothing narrow-minded or selfish in a true disciple of Jesus Christ. And, indeed, how can we love God without being anxious to see those for whom our Lord died, and who are our brethren in Jesus Christ (being, like us, children of God),

receive his blessings, graces, and helps, as well as ourselves? It is for this reason that, when we are reciting the litanies, we say, "Lord have mercy on *us*, Holy Mary pray for *us*," and not "Lord have mercy on *me*, Holy Mary pray for *me*." And in the Our Father you will see that all along we pray for our neighbour as well as for ourselves. "Give us this day *our* daily bread." "Deliver *us* from evil," that is, deliver our brethren, relations, friends, and all our fellow creatures, along with ourselves. Thus, you see, we join charity with our prayer; and that God of love who cannot but be pleased with our charity, will be far more likely to grant us what we ask than if we prayed for ourselves alone.

Q. What do we pray for when we say, Hallowed be Thy name?

A. We pray that God may be praised, loved, and served by all His creatures.

I have told you, my dear children, that the Our Father contains seven beautiful prayers or petitions, in which we lay before Almighty God all our spiritual and temporal wants. But, if you look at these petitions attentively, you will find a great difference between the three first and the four last. In what way is there a difference? In this, that the three first are all about Almighty God, praying for his name to be hallowed, his kingdom to come, and his will to be done; and the four last are all about our own wants; praying for our daily bread, forgiveness for our sins, and deliverance from temptation and every evil. Accordingly, it is in this way that we always divide the Our Father. Thus, when I am saying it with you, I say the first part, relating to Almighty God, and you say the second part, relating to ourselves.

Now, we come to consider the first petition, which

is, *Hallowed be thy name.* What is the meaning of the word *hallowed*? It is an old English word, meaning "sanctified," or "made holy." But how can we make the name of God holy, for it is holy already, most holy and sacred? We cannot, indeed, *make* it holy, but we can help to make known to the world how holy it is by praising, loving, and serving him who bears it. The meaning of this petition, therefore, is, *May God be praised, loved, and served by all his creatures.* In other words, we pray that glory may be given to Almighty God by the praise, love, and service which we desire to be rendered to him both by ourselves and by all mankind. It is for this one object, indeed, that God has made us and sent us into the world; and he has made our happiness in the next world to depend upon our giving him glory in this. For you remember that when the catechism asks, "Why has God made you?" the answer is, "To know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him for ever in the next." Now, it is for this to be done, namely, for God to be glorified by our knowing, loving, and serving him, that we pray when we say, "Hallowed be thy name."

But perhaps you do not yet understand how the holy and venerable name of God can be hallowed or glorified by the praise, love, and service of such poor creatures as ourselves. Listen and I will explain it to you more clearly. Let us suppose that a man has two sons. One of them has a bad, ungrateful heart; moreover, he is very disobedient and unruly. He sets his father at defiance, speaks to him rudely and disrespectfully, and is noted all over the neighbourhood for cursing, swearing, stealing, and every sort of wickedness. Does *he* give glory to his father? No; you say that he is a disgrace to his father, that he dishonours his father's name. But the other son,

on the contrary, loves his father tenderly, is docile and obedient to his commands, treats him with the greatest respect, defends his honour whenever it is attacked, and, finally, edifies the whole neighbourhood by his virtue and piety. Does *he* give glory to his father? Yes, for every one says, "Happy the father who gave birth to such a son! All honour to that good and excellent parent!" Now you will understand how the name of our heavenly Father is *hallowed*, or glorified, by the virtues and piety of his good children, and dishonoured, alas! by the vices and evil conduct of the bad.

The beautiful history of Abraham praying for the city of Sodom, shows us how ready Almighty God is to hear and grant the prayers which his faithful servants offer for their brethren. Listen and I will relate it to you.

#### THE PRAYER OF ABRAHAM.

After Abraham had entertained the three Angels, who had come, on the part of God, to announce to him the birth of his son Isaac, they arose, as the Holy Scripture tells us, and turned their eyes to Sodom, being about to proceed to that wicked city to execute the vengeance of God on its guilty inhabitants.

"And the Lord said, *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous. I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry that is come to me.* And they turned themselves from thence and went their way to Sodom.

"But Abraham as yet stood before the Lord. And, drawing nigh, he said, *Wilt thou destroy the just with the wicked? If there be fifty just men in the city, shall they perish withal? Far be it from thee to do this thing.*

"And the Lord said to him, *If I find in Sodom fifty just within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.*

"And Abraham answered and said, *Seeing I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes. What if there be five less than fifty just persons? Wilt thou for five and forty destroy the whole city?*

"And he said, *I will not destroy it, if I find five and forty.*

"And again he said to him, *But if forty be found there, what wilt thou do?*

"He said, *I will not destroy it for the sake of forty.*

"Lord, saith he, *be not angry if I speak. What if thirty shall be found there?*

"He answered, *I will not do it if I find thirty there.*

"Seeing, saith he, *I have once begun, I will speak to my Lord. What if twenty be found there?*

"He said, *I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty.*

"*I beseech thee, saith he, be not angry, Lord, if I speak yet once more. What if ten should be found there?*

"And he said, *I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.*

"And the Lord departed after he had left speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place."—*Gen. xviii.*

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, Thy kingdom come?

A. We pray that God may come and reign in our hearts by His grace, and may bring us all hereafter to His heavenly kingdom.

When our Blessed Lord was brought before the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, by the Jewish mob, he was accused by their leaders of seeking to make himself king, and to destroy the power of the Roman Emperor, who at that time reigned over the Jews. We read in the Gospel, that Pilate wishing to discover whether this charge was true, asked him plainly, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Our Blessed Lord answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now my kingdom is not from hence." Again Pilate put the question to him, "Art thou a king then?" This time our Blessed Lord answered, "For this I was born, and for this I came into the world."\* From this we see, my dear children, that our Blessed Lord came into this world to establish a *kingdom*, not, however, a temporal one,

\* John xviii, 33, &c.

as Pilate feared, but a spiritual one, of which he had no reason to be afraid. Now it is of this kingdom that we speak in this petition of the Our Father, when we say, *Thy kingdom come*. In other words we pray, *that God may come and reign in our hearts by his grace, and bring us all hereafter to his heavenly kingdom*.

You see, therefore, that the word *kingdom* in this place, means "the spiritual reign of God in our souls," which reign is begun in this life by his grace, and made perfect hereafter in heaven. We pray for its establishment, not only in our own hearts, but in the hearts of all mankind, because by this God will be glorified, and also because we are not to pray for ourselves only, but for all others. The establishment of the kingdom of God means, therefore, the conversion of infidels, heretics and sinners, as also perseverance and the increase of God's grace in the souls of the good.

Tell me now, my dear children, do you think that the kingdom of God is established in your own hearts? Who is the king there, Jesus Christ or the devil? I will tell you how you are to know. Have you any mortal sin in your souls? If so, the devil is king there; for by mortal sin you turn traitors to God, renounce your allegiance and try to overturn his kingdom. If you have no mortal sin on your souls, our Blessed Lord is still king of your hearts, though perhaps you are not always as faithful to him in lesser things as you should be. Again, take notice, *he* is the king of a country, who is obeyed by every one in the land, both high and low, rich and poor. Now, in your soul, who is it that your passions, your desires, your senses, your affections obey? Is it God or the devil? For example, when the devil puts it into your mind to steal, and our Blessed Lord gives you a good thought to be honest, whom do your hands obey? If you find that they

obey the devil, and that you give way to the temptation, it is plain that by this you acknowledge *him* to be your king, rather than our Blessed Lord. . But if, on the contrary, you put away the devil's wicked temptation, and, whispering a little prayer to our Blessed Lord, follow the good thought which He puts into your mind, then it is clear that you love our Blessed Lord as your king, and obey him as such.

There is one more thing to be said, and it is this. Whoever reigns in your hearts now in this world, will reign over you for ever in the next. If our Blessed Lord is your king now, He will bring you hereafter to share for all eternity the glory and delights of His heavenly kingdom. But if the devil now reigns over you, he will reign over you for all eternity in hell, where he will for ever torture and torment you.

Q. What do we pray for when we say, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven?

A. We pray that God may enable us, by His grace, to do His will in all things, as the blessed do in heaven.

In the two first petitions of the Our Father, we have prayed that God may be glorified, and his kingdom established in the hearts of all mankind. Now, this would certainly be the case, if all were ready to conform themselves in everything to his adorable Will. We therefore pray, in this third petition, that God will give us grace to do his Holy Will on earth with the same exactness and the same cheerful readiness, with which the blessed Angels and Saints do it in heaven.

I need not tell you, my dear children, that we are bound by every title to do the Holy and Adorable Will of God, whenever we can discover it. He is our Maker and Preserver ; all that we have, and our

very being, is his gift. He is, therefore, our Sovereign Lord and Master; but he would rather we should try to do his Holy Will because he is our tender and loving Father. Moreover, we have the happiness of knowing that when we are doing the Will of God, we are working out our own salvation, for God has made our eternal happiness in the next world to depend upon doing his holy Will in this.

How then, you will ask, are we to know what the Will of God is; for if we can only find that out, the road to heaven is straight before us. Listen and I will tell you.

In the first place, Almighty God has made known his Will to us by his commandments. "I am the Lord thy God," he said to the Jews, "Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," &c. Whoever, therefore, breaks any of the Ten Commandments goes against the plain and distinct Will of Almighty God.

In the second place, God makes his Will known by his Church. "He that heareth you," he says, "heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."\* Whoever, therefore, breaks the commandments of the Church, for example, by eating meat on Friday, missing Sunday's Mass, &c., evidently transgresses the express Will of Almighty God.

Thirdly, God makes his Will known to us by our Superiors, that is our parents, masters, or those whom he places over us. Our Superiors are to us in the place of Almighty God. If we disobey them, we disobey God; if we murmur against them, we murmur against God himself.

Fourthly, God makes his Will known by all that happens to us, since all that happens in the world happens by God's direct sending, or by his permission. Thus, if sickness comes to us, we know that it is

\* Luke x. 16.

God who has sent it; if we lose some dear friend or relative by death, we know that it is God who has taken him away; and if we are ill treated or badly spoken of, we know that, though this seems to come from our neighbour, still it has happened to us by God's special permission, and that he has certainly some good design in permitting it to befall us. And not only is this the case in great and important things, but even in the least events that happen to us, so that we have the opportunity every moment of gaining immense merit by cheerfully and readily submitting to the Will of God in everything that he sends us. For example, we are to go on a pleasant excursion, and a storm comes on and prevents us; we lose a nice prize which we expected to get; we find the weather too cold in winter and too hot in summer. In all these things we should recognise the Will of God, who, with a wonderful providence, rules and directs every thing for our good, so that what he sends us is always the best thing that could happen to us. Whoever, therefore, grumbles and murmurs at any thing which befalls him, grumbles and murmurs against the Will of Almighty God, and in reality against his own good. But whoever, on the contrary, seeks in all things to follow and conform himself to the Will of God, is walking in the footsteps of the Saints, on the straight and direct road to eternal life.

Our Blessed Redeemer, who is the perfect model by which we are to form our lives, teaches us in many places that the life of a Christian upon earth should be employed only in doing the Holy and Adorable Will of God. But what he has taught us by his Divine Words, he teaches us still more powerfully by his own example. Hence he says of himself, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the Will of Him that sent me."\* And,

\* John vi. 38.

again, "My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent me."\*

#### EXAMPLE OF OUR BLESSED LORD.

Follow our Blessed Lord, my dear children, through every circumstance of his painful life, and you will find him employed only in doing the Will of his Heavenly Father. If he was born in a stable, subjected to every suffering and privation at his very entrance into the world, and exiled into Egypt in his earliest infancy, it was to fulfil the Will of his Heavenly Father who had so decreed it. If again he remained for thirty years in a poor cottage, working at the laborious trade of a carpenter, and obedient in all things to his own creatures, it was because his Heavenly Father so willed it. And if in the end he was subjected to so many cruel torments in his bitter Passion, and closed his life by an agonizing and ignominious death upon the cross, it was that he might accomplish in all things the Adorable Will of his Father. Wherefore, he says by the mouth of his prophet, "In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will. O my God I have desired it, and thy law in the midst of my heart."† And the Apostle St. Paul adds, "He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."‡

But if you wish to see how powerfully the love of his Father's Will ruled in the heart of our Lord, and how entirely it guided every action of his life, go with him in spirit to the Garden of Olives on the night before his cruel Passion. There all the torments, which he was about to suffer, came before his mind, one by one, in the most clear and distinct manner, and oppressed his soul with a mortal sadness. "He began," says the evangelist, "to grow sorrowful and to be sad."§ Prostrate on the ground he prayed to his Heavenly Father, but he seemed as it were to be rejected by Him, being laden as he was with the sins of the whole world, which he had taken it upon himself to atone for. The ingratitude of mankind, their many horrible sacrileges, and the loss of innumerable souls in spite of his sufferings, filled up the cup of his bitterness. "And being in an agony," says St. Luke, "he prayed the longer, and his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground."|| And what was his prayer? "My Father," said he, "if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."¶

\* John iv. 34.

† Ps. xxxix. 8, 9.

‡ Phil. ii. 8.

§ Matt. xxvi. 37.

|| Luke xxii. 43-4.

¶ Matt. xxvi. 39.

O beautiful prayer, model of the prayer of every Christian, when in suffering and affliction! Like our Blessed Redeemer we may pray indeed for our sorrow to be removed, but always let us add, "Yet not my will, but thine be done." "Thy Will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

#### THE PATIENCE OF JOB.

The patience of holy Job under the severest trials has passed into a proverb, and is a bright example to all who are suffering and afflicted.

We read in the sacred writings that this holy man, being delivered by God for a time into the power of the devil, for the trial of his patience and the confusion of that wicked spirit, was in a short time stripped of all his worldly goods, which were carried off by robbers; deprived of his promising family, who all perished by the fall of a house where they were feasting; afflicted with a loathsome leprosy from head to foot, and left to scrape himself on a dunghill with a piece of broken pot. In the depth of his affliction he became an object of reproach to the passers by, and even his own wife and friends mocked and derided him. But listen to his admirable sentiments. "Naked," he says, "I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so be it done: blessed be the name of the Lord."

And when his wife bade him blaspheme God and die, he made her this noble answer: "Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women. If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?"—*Job i., ii.*

In Job thus loaded with affliction, covered from head to foot with cruel sores, abandoned by all, and derided by his very friends, we recognise a striking figure of our Blessed Lord in all the sufferings and abandonment of his bitter Passion.

#### KING DAVID.

The holy king David, when driven from Jerusalem and supplanted on the throne by his undutiful son Absalom, whom he had loved above all his other children, acknowledged at

once the hand of God punishing him for his sins, and resigned himself entirely to the accomplishment of the Divine Will. The few followers who remained faithful to him, accompanied him in his flight with tears in their eyes, and uttering loud lamentations. Among them was Sadoc the High Priest, who, attended by the Levites, bore with him the Ark of the Lord, that David might be consoled in his affliction by the presence of so sacred an object. But the holy king, deeming himself unworthy of so great a favour, bade him return with it to the city. "Carry back," said he, "the ark into the city. If I shall find grace in the sight of the Lord, he will bring me again, and he will shew me it and his tabernacle. But if he shall say, *thou pleasest me not*, I am ready ; let him do that which is good before him."

Having crossed the brook of Cedron, he was met by a man named Semei, of the family of Saul, who cursed him as he went along, and loaded him with insults and reproaches. Not content with offering him these outrages, he had the insolence even to throw stones at David and his followers. The latter begged the king to allow them to avenge the insult ; and one of them, Abisai, said, "I will go and cut off his head." But David said, "Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bid him curse David ; and who is he that shall dare say, *Why hath he done so?*"—II. *Kings*, xv. xvi.

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## TWENTY-THIRD INSTRUCTION.

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*The Lord's Prayer—Continued. Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Petitions.*

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, Give us this day our daily bread ?

A. We pray that God may give us daily all that is necessary for our souls and bodies.

We come now to the fourth petition of the Our Father, in which we beg of God that he will *give us*

*daily all that is necessary for our souls and bodies.* For the word *bread* means, in this place, both the spiritual bread or food of our souls, which is the grace of God, and the Holy Communion; and also the food, clothing, and other necessities of life which we require for the support of our bodies. But notice, that we do not ask for anything more than God sees to be *necessary* or good for us; wherefore our Blessed Lord makes use of the word *bread*, bread being of all things the most necessary for our existence. And notice, too, that he bids us ask only what we require for the present day, "Give us *this day* our daily bread," to shew our daily dependence on his Divine Goodness, and teach us to avoid too great care and anxiety. For, as he tells us himself in one of his beautiful instructions, we have a Heavenly Father ever watching over us, who knows well the wants of his children, and is always ready to provide for those wants, if we daily have recourse to him by fervent prayers. Thus, you remember, when God fed the Jews with manna in the desert, he bade them collect only as much each morning as would be sufficient for the want of the day; and if any of them tried to hoard up a quantity to keep himself and family during the week, and save himself the trouble of going every day to collect it, he was surprised to find that he had lost his labour, for what he had gathered was all corrupted and spoilt by the following morning.

Do not however imagine that because God is good, and willing to supply your wants, you are excused after you have once prayed, from making any further effort on your own part, and that you are to sit down in idleness, expecting everything from his Bounty. No; this would be presumption, and not a well-founded hope in the Divine Goodness. *God*, as they say, *helps those who help themselves*, that is by their

own efforts. It is necessary therefore, that while we ask of God to give us his grace, we should make use also of all the means which he has given us to obtain it, for example, by hearing Mass devoutly, and going to the Sacraments. In the same way, while we beg relief in our corporal wants, we must do our best by our own honest industry and labour to provide for them. At the same time, in making these efforts we must never forget that all depends on the blessing and assistance of God, which we therefore ask continually in this petition of the Our Father, *Give us this day our daily bread.*

## OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

"Be not solicitous," says our Blessed Lord, "for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat and the body more than the raiment ?

"Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they ?

"And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit ?

"And for raiment, why are you solicitous ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow : they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.

"And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith ?

"Be not solicitous therefore, saying, *What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed ?* For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.

"Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."—*Matt.* vi.

## THE POWER OF PRAYER.

Many years ago, in times of persecution, a Catholic Bishop, while travelling in the Highlands of Scotland, for the purpose of visiting the scattered members of his flock, was benighted

one dark and stormy night, in the midst of a lonely and desolate tract of country. After wandering about for some time in the greatest uncertainty, he was directed at length by the glimmering of a light to a lonely cabin, at the door of which he knocked, and begged for a night's lodging. The woman of the house received him with frank hospitality, bade him welcome to the warm fireside, and apologised for not being able to offer him a bed. "The only one that we have," said she, "is now occupied by my husband, who is lying at present at the point of death." "I am truly sorry to hear of your affliction," said the Bishop, "but I trust he is well prepared for so great a change." "Alas," said the woman, wiping her eyes, "he will not be persuaded that his end is so near. Though he is above eighty, and though the doctor says that his hours are numbered, yet he persists in saying that his time is not yet come." "Will you allow me to speak to him?" said the Bishop; "perhaps the opinion of a stranger may have greater weight, and he may be persuaded to prepare for his approaching departure." "Willingly," said the woman; and with that she led the way into the inner room.

Having approached the bedside, the Bishop saw that there was little time to be lost; every thing betokened the near approach of death. This he did not conceal from the old man, and he exhorted him to make good use of the few hours which remained to him upon earth; but his words seemed to produce but little impression. "Sir," said the old man, "I know that my age is great. I know that my strength is almost gone. I even grant that if I saw another in the state in which I am, I would say he was at the point of death; but, for all that, I know that my time is not yet come."

"My dear friend," said the Bishop, "do not deceive yourself. Why should not death come to you as well as to the rest of men? What can have put so extraordinary a delusion into your head?"

"I will tell you then, sir," said the old man, raising himself up in bed. "Why should I fear now what man can do to me? I am a Catholic. I have remained faithful to my God, in spite of every danger and every difficulty, though in this wild place I have not seen a priest but twice in thirty years. But every day during these thirty years have I prayed to God, that I might not die without the consolations of religion. He will not refuse this prayer—I know he will not; and, when I have a Catholic priest at my bedside to give me the last Sacraments, then I shall believe I am going to die, but not till then."

"My son," said the Bishop, "prepare yourself for death ; I am a Catholic priest."

The holy rites were administered ; the faithful soul slept in peace, and the good Bishop went on his way rejoicing, and praising God for his wonderful works towards the children of men.—*The Little Flower Garden.*

#### THE THUNDERING LEGION.

Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, was engaged in a disastrous war with the Quadi, a brave and warlike people living on the north of the Danube. His army had been hemmed in by the enemy within a narrow defile, and was, moreover, on the point of perishing for the want of a supply of water. Among his troops were a large number of Christian soldiers, who, seeing the danger which threatened them, resolved to have recourse for help to the God of heaven. Kneeling on the ground, they poured out earnest entreaties to God to rescue the army and their emperor from destruction, by sending them a supply of water and enabling them to escape from their dangerous position. The enemy, and even their fellow-soldiers, stood amazed at this unexpected sight, but they were far more astonished at the speedy answer which God gave to their prayers. They had not been long on their knees, when suddenly the sky became dark, the wind howled through the forests, vivid flashes of lightning shot across the heavens, and torrents of rain began to descend. The Roman soldiers first received the refreshing drops in their mouths, being ready to die with thirst ; they then caught them in their helmets ; but while they were so engaged, the enemy, wishing to overpower them in the storm, began the attack. The violence of the tempest was now turned upon the forces of the enemy. Blinded with wind and rain, they were unable to follow up the attack, and soon fled in disorder. The Romans, refreshed and strengthened, pursued them with great vigour, and gained a complete and decisive victory.

The pagan emperor justly attributed this victory to the prayers of his Christian soldiers, and they were from that time known by the name of the *Thundering Legion*. In the city of Rome there may still be seen a column or pillar on which is carved a representation of this victory. The Romans are represented as fighting bravely with the enemy, and in the midst of the battle refreshing themselves with draughts of the falling rain. The enemy, on the contrary, are flying from the field of battle, where many lie stretched on the ground from the violence of the storm.—*Alban Butler.*

Q. What do we pray for when we say, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us?

A. We pray that God may forgive us our sins, as we forgive others the injuries they do us.

In this fifth petition of the Our Father, we pray that God will *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*. But what is the meaning of the word *trespass*, my dear children? It is an old English word, meaning a "sin" or "offence." At present, with the change of language which is always going on, the meaning of the word is a little different. For now we only use the word *trespass* in speaking of one who goes on other people's land without leave. We say of such a one that he is trespassing, or committing a trespass; and I have no doubt you have often seen, at the entrance of a field, a board with the words, written in large letters, "Trespassers will be prosecuted." It is not in this meaning, however, but in the old or general meaning of "sin" or "offence," that the word is used in the Our Father, so that we here pray *that God may forgive us our sins, as we forgive others the injuries they do us*.

Whenever, therefore, we say this petition of the Our Father, we beg of God to pardon us our sins, and hence we should try to say it with great humility, acknowledging ourselves to be sinners, and with great sorrow, since God only forgives our sins when we truly repent of them. Our Blessed Lord has indeed given us the Sacrament of Penance or Confession, as the great and principal means by which we may obtain pardon for our sins; but as there are many sins which we daily commit, and all of which we cannot perhaps remember when we go to confession, and as, moreover, we cannot get to confession except at certain times, our Blessed Lord has mercifully provided us with other means of obtaining

his pardon for lesser offences, as, for example, by this petition of the Our Father which we recite so often.

But notice, my dear children, that our Blessed Lord has taught us to pray for pardon for our sins only according as we forgive others, or, as this petition says, *as we forgive them that trespass against us*. For there is nothing so hateful to God as malice, ill-will, and the spirit of revenge, and those who entertain these feelings against their neighbour have no reason to expect any mercy or pardon from their Heavenly Father. Therefore, our Lord, to remind us of the duty of mutual forgiveness, has put this condition to our prayer; and, in explaining this petition to his disciples, he expressly says, "If you will forgive men their offences, your Heavenly Father will forgive you your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences." \* And in another place he says, "If you offer your gift before the altar, and there, thou remember, that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift." †

See, then, my dear children, how necessary it is for us, if we hope for pardon from God, to pardon others also from our hearts, when they injure us, and to do our best to be reconciled and to make friends with them. And how, indeed, can we possibly continue to bear malice against them, when we remember the immense debt which we ourselves owe to the justice of God? If they have offended us, how much more have not we outraged and offended Almighty God? Besides, those that *do* injure us, though they sin by so doing, are but instruments in the hand of God—instruments which

\* Matt. vi. 14, 15.

† Matt. v. 23, 24.

He makes use of to punish us, and to give us an opportunity of meriting a greater reward. Put away, then, from your hearts any rancour or ill-will, when you go to pray. Never lie down on your bed out of friends with any one, lest you should die out of friends with God. Imitate our Blessed Lord who, on the cross, prayed for those even who persecuted and crucified him.

We read in the Holy Gospel, that one day when our Blessed Lord was instructing his disciples, St. Peter came to him, and put the following question: "*Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?*" Jesus saith to him, *I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times.*" Our Blessed Lord then went on to explain the duty of mutual forgiveness by the following beautiful parable.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SERVANTS.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And, as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt.

But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow servants, that owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of him he throttled him, saying, "Pay what thou owest." And his fellow servant falling down, besought him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt.

Now, his fellow servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him, "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou be-

soughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?" And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the torturers, until he paid all the debt.

So, also, shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.—*Matt. xviii.*

#### THE TWO SEBASTIANS.

The blessed Sebastian Valfré, when a boy at school, was distinguished for his amiable manners and sweet and gentle disposition. One day a quarrel arose between two of his companions, and one of them, who was likewise called Sebastian, being very angry, openly declared that he would have his revenge for the injury he had received. The young Valfré, hearing of this, went to the angry boy, and thus accosted him: "Did you say the Our Father this morning, my dear Sebastian?" "I did," replied the other. "But, did you say it attentively?" continued Valfré, in a sweet and persuasive tone. "Most certainly," said the other, who did not see the drift or aim of the question. "But then," continued Valfré, "since you said it with attention, you must have observed these words, *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us*. Ah, my dear friend, let us not shut ourselves out from the hope of the Divine Mercy, by refusing to pardon those who give us offence." The angry boy was so touched by these simple words of the pious youth, that he laid aside all thoughts of revenge, and forgave his schoolfellow on the spot.—*Life of the Blessed Sebastian Valfré.*

#### ST. JOHN THE ALMONER.

We read in the life of St. John, Patriarch of Alexandria, surnamed the Almoner on account of his extraordinary almsdeeds, that he had on several occasions tried in vain to reconcile to each other two noblemen of that city, who had quarrelled, and lived in a state of mortal enmity. At length, despairing of moving them by his words and entreaties, he sent for the one, who showed the greatest degree of obstinacy, inviting him to come to his house, and assist at the Mass, which he was about to celebrate in his private oratory. The nobleman accepted the invitation, and on his arrival the Saint began the Mass, and proceeded as far as the *Pater Noster*, or *Our Father*, which it was the custom at that time for those, who assisted at the Mass, to recite along with the priest.

St. John accordingly began it, and the nobleman said it with him, but as soon as he reached the fifth petition, the Saint came to a full stop, and left the nobleman to finish it alone. Then, turning to him, he exhorted him earnestly to weigh the meaning of the words he had pronounced; that there, in the very presence of Jesus Christ, he had implored God to pardon him or not, according as he forgave or refused to forgive his enemy. The nobleman was so struck with this reflection, that he fell at the Saint's feet, promising to dismiss all thoughts of revenge, and to go at once and ask his enemy's forgiveness. No sooner was the Mass over than he put his design into execution, and from that moment became a sincere friend to his former adversary.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, Lead us not into temptation?

A. We pray that God may give us grace not to yield to temptation.

*Lead us not into temptation.* This is the sixth petition of the Our Father. In the last petition we begged of God to forgive us our *sins*, and in this we beg of him to preserve us from *temptation*. For temptation, as you all know, is the mother of sin; and though God might pardon our past sins, yet we should fall into fresh ones, if he did not assist us to overcome temptation.

But who is it, my dear children, who *tempts* or tries to get us to commit sin? It is not Almighty God, because God is Holy and Good, and hates sin, and "God tempteth no man,"\* as St. James says. Who then? It is the devil, you know, who is the bitter enemy of God and man, and tries to get man to commit sin, that God may be dishonoured, and man may be ruined and destroyed. But could not God, you will say, prevent the devil from tempting us? Most certainly he could; but for his own wise ends he does not prevent him. He allows him to go on tempting us, as he formerly let him tempt Adam

\* James i. 13.

and Eve in the Garden of Paradise. And he permits it for the selfsame reason for which he allowed our first parents to be tempted, namely, that we may show our obedience and love to him and merit his heavenly rewards by resisting temptation. For he does not allow us to be tempted above our strength, that is above the strength of his grace, which he will always give us if we ask him, and which alone will enable us to overcome temptation. Wherefore St. Paul says, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."\*

But if it is the devil and not Almighty God who tempts us to sin, what is it that we mean by asking God in this petition of the Our Father not to *lead us into temptation*. We mean two things:—First, to beg of God to restrain the power of the devil, and not to allow him to tempt us too violently; and, secondly, to ask him to give us in all our temptations the necessary grace to overcome them. We do not, therefore, pray so much to be freed from temptation, since temptation is necessary for us to merit heaven, as to be delivered by the increase of God's grace from the danger of falling under it. In other words, we pray, as the catechism says, *that God may give us grace not to yield, or give way, to temptation*. This grace our Good God will always give us if we ask it, provided that we, on our part, do not expose ourselves willingly to danger, for example, by reading bad books or going into wicked company, for then we could not expect God to preserve us. God has promised to help us to overcome temptation, if we do our best to avoid it; but he has likewise warned us, that "he who loves the danger shall perish in it."†

\* I. Cor. x. 13.

† Eccles. iii. 27.

Our Blessed Redeemer, who has given us in his own person a perfect model, by which to form our conduct in all the events of life, allowed himself to be tempted in the desert by the evil spirit, that he might show us how to overcome the attacks of the devil. Listen and I will tell you the history of our Lord's temptations as they are related by St. Matthew.

#### OUR BLESSED LORD IN THE DESERT.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry.

And the tempter, coming, said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

Who answered and said, "*Not on bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.*"

Then the devil took him up into the holy City, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, *That he hath given his Angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone.*"

Jesus saith to him, "It is written again, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*"

Again the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said to him, "All these will I give thee, if, falling down, thou wilt adore me."

Then Jesus saith to him, "Begone, Satan, for it is written, *The Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and him only thou shalt serve.*"

Then the devil left him, and behold Angels came and ministered to him.—*Matt. iv.*

#### THE TEMPTATIONS OF ST. PAUL.

St. Paul, the holy Apostle of the Gentiles, who suffered so much for his Divine Master, and received in reward such an abundance of heavenly favours, was afflicted at one time with grievous temptations, which he calls a sting of the flesh, meaning, probably, violent temptations of impurity. These were permitted by Almighty God to preserve him in a spirit of humility, for he himself says, "Lest the greatness of the

revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me." The holy Apostle, detesting from his heart the wicked suggestions of the tempter, earnestly and repeatedly begged our Blessed Lord to deliver him from this severe trial; but the only answer he received from God was this, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity."—II. *Cor.* xii.

From this example we see, that though Almighty God is always ready to give us grace sufficient to preserve us from sin, he sometimes permits the temptation to continue for his own wise ends, namely, that the power of his grace may become more perfectly established in our hearts by our correspondence with it, and that he may be more glorified by the victories we gain over the efforts of the tempter.

#### THE TEMPTATIONS OF ST. ANTHONY.

The great St. Anthony, who retired into the desert to avoid the dangers and seductions of the world, and to give himself up to prayer and works of penance, was even there pursued by the violent attacks of the devil and subjected to the most grievous temptations. At one time his body was cruelly beaten by Satan, and remained for a long time on the ground apparently lifeless; at another, the wicked spirits assumed all kinds of hideous shapes, in order to terrify him and distract him in his prayer. But what was the most dangerous and afflicting to his pure soul, were the wicked thoughts and filthy imaginations which never ceased to assail him. On one occasion, when he had for a long time bravely withstood the attacks of the devil, and was still grievously tempted, suddenly a ray of heavenly light burst in upon him, scattered his enemies, and filled him with joy and consolation. St. Anthony, feeling that our Blessed Lord was near him, cried out, with that humble confidence which true love alone can give, "Where wast thou, my Lord and my Master? Why wast thou not here from the beginning of my conflict to assuage my pains?" A voice answered him, "Anthony, I was here the whole time. I stood by thee, and beheld thy combat. And because thou hast manfully withstood thy enemies, I will always protect thee, and will render thy name famous throughout the earth." At these words, St. Anthony knelt,

and returned thanks to that good Lord, who, when he knew it not, stood by to aid and assist him in his combat.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### THE PRESUMPTUOUS HERMIT.

We read in the lives of the holy fathers of the desert, S.S. Palemon and Pachomius, that, while living together in solitude in the deserts of Thebais, they were one day visited by another hermit, who begged admittance into their cell. On entering he perceived a fire, and being puffed up with pride and presumption, said, "You see that fire; well, if you have faith, and slowly repeat the Lord's Prayer, you may place yourself in the flames without danger." St. Palemon charitably reproved him for his criminal presumption, telling him, that to act thus would be to tempt God, and that whoever did so would have no reason to hope for the Divine protection. The new comer, however, rejecting the advice of the holy man, threw himself upon the burning coals, and, as Almighty God permitted in punishment of his pride, actually received no hurt; whereupon, the unhappy man, more blinded than ever, reproached the two Saints for their want of faith.

The next day he took his departure, and returned to his cell, where he quickly met with the punishment of his vain glory and presumption; for as soon as he was alone, the devil began to tempt him with impure imaginations, and he, who had so prided himself on his firmness and courageous faith, yielded shamefully to the wicked temptations. No sooner had he done so, than he gave way to despair, and, rushing from his cell, cast himself into a blazing furnace, where he perished miserably.—*Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*

Q. What do we pray for, when we say, Deliver us from evil?

A. We pray that God may free us from all evil of soul and body.

This is the last of the seven petitions of the Our Father, and in it we pray to God to *free us from all evil*, that is, from anything that can injure us, either in *soul or body*, in time or eternity. Now, of all evils, my dear children, the greatest is sin, which is indeed the cause of every other evil; and the next greatest to sin is eternal damnation, which is the just punishment of the worst kind of sin, viz., mortal sin.

Those other things which we commonly look upon as evils, such as sickness, poverty and various kinds of afflictions, are in reality not evils in themselves, since they are intended by God to be the source of good to us, by exercising our virtue, and giving us the means of making satisfaction for our sins, and acquiring a crown of glory in heaven. However, as, owing to our own imperfection, we often make a bad use of these things, we ask of God that, as far as he sees it good for us, he will be pleased to deliver us from these evils also. You see, therefore, how our Lord compassionates our weakness, and how he has provided a remedy for all our wants and necessities in the seven petitions of this beautiful prayer.

#### THE PRIEST AND THE BEGGAR.

We read in the works of Thaulerus that there was a certain learned Divine, who had made it his continual prayer to God for eight years, that he would direct him to some man who would show him the true way in which to walk. At length on one occasion, when praying with extraordinary fervour, he heard a voice from heaven, which said to him, "Go to the church porch, and there thou shalt meet with a man who will show thee the way of truth." On going thither he found a poor beggar, whose feet were covered with sores and dirt, while all the clothes on his back were not worth three farthings. The priest, saluting him courteously, wished him a good morning. "Father," replied the beggar, "I never remember to have had a bad morning." "God prosper you," said the priest. "What say you," replied the beggar, "I never was otherwise than prosperous." "I wish you all happiness," said the priest. "Why," said the poor man, "I never was unhappy." "God bless you," said the priest, "explain yourself, for I do not understand your meaning."

"I will do so willingly," answered the poor man. "You wished me a good morning, and I answered that I never had a bad morning; for if I am hungry, I praise God; if I suffer cold, I praise God; if it hail, snow or rain, be the weather fair or foul, I give praise to God; if I am miserable and despised by the world, I still give praise to God; and therefore I never meet with a bad morning. You also prayed that God might

prosper me, to which I answered that I was never otherwise than prosperous; for I know for certain that all God does must needs be for the best, and, therefore, whatever happens to me by his will or permission, whether pleasant or disagreeable, sweet or bitter, I receive it with joy as coming from his merciful hand for the best—so that I was never otherwise than prosperous. You wished me also all happiness, and I in like manner replied that I had never been unhappy; for I have given up my own will to God so entirely, as only to will what he wills, and therefore I never was unhappy, having no desire to have any will except His.”—*Old Edition of Philothea.*

From this example we see, that no temporal affliction can disturb a heart entirely united to God, and conformed to his Holy and Adorable Will.

Listen, now, while I repeat to you, in short, what I have taught you about the Lord's Prayer.

The words *Our Father, who art in heaven*, are a short introduction, to excite our confidence by reminding us of the Goodness and Power of God.

The first three petitions relate principally to God.  
We pray for

His Name to be glorified,  
His Kingdom to be spread, and  
His Will to be accomplished.

The last four petitions relate to ourselves. We pray, first, for the daily support of our souls and bodies, and then to be freed

From our past sins,  
From the danger of future ones, and  
From all evil.

We conclude with the word *Amen*, which means, “May it be so,” as much as to say, “This is our prayer, O good God! Wilt thou be pleased to hear and to grant it.”

## TWENTY-FOURTH INSTRUCTION.

*The Hail Mary. On Praying to the Saints and Angels. First and Second Parts of the Hail Mary. On Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.*

Q. May we ask the Saints and Angels to pray for us?

A. Yes, we may.

Q. Why do we ask the Saints and Angels to pray for us?

A. Because they are our brethren, and their prayers have great power with God.

Having now explained the Lord's Prayer, we come to speak of the Hail Mary, which is the next best prayer that we can say. But first of all, the catechism teaches us that it is a good and holy practice to ask the prayers of the Saints and Angels; and this for two reasons,—first, *because they are our brethren*, and, secondly, *because their prayers have great power with God*. In other words, they are both *willing* and *able* to help us; willing, because they are our brethren, and able, because they are the friends and favourites of God, and their prayers have, therefore, great power with his Divine Majesty.

In the first place, the Angels and Saints *are our brethren*. For are not those truly our brethren who are children of the same Heavenly Father; who acknowledge the same Head, Jesus Christ; and who are united with us by the strongest bonds of fraternal charity? Now, all this is true of the Saints and Angels in heaven. God is our common Father,

because he made us all, Angels as well as Saints and sinful men, and also because he continually watches over and preserves us. He has, moreover, given his Divine Son to be our common Head. For the blessed Angels, though, as they had never sinned, they stood not in need of the grace of the Redemption, nevertheless love our blessed Lord as their Head, and acknowledge and obey him as such. Hence, the Apostle St. Paul says, He "is the Head of all principality and power;"\* that is, of the choirs of heavenly spirits. Finally, it is for the same eternal glory that God has created us. The Saints and Angels are already in secure possession of that eternal kingdom; but we also hope one day to enter into their happy company.† Meanwhile they regard us with a brother's love, watching over us with the tenderest care, assisting us in our combats, and pleading for us continually at the throne of God.

But the Saints and Angels are not only *willing* to help us, they are also *able*, for *their prayers have great power with God*. Who can doubt it, my dear children, since they are the friends of God, and ever stand in his Divine presence? If earthly monarchs do not fail to grant many favours to their subjects at prayer of those who stand about their thrones, and whom they honour with their friendship, especially if they have laboured and suffered in their service, is it possible that the Great King of Heaven will refuse to those blessed spirits, who have been faithful to him from their first creation; to that glorious band of martyrs, who have suffered cruel torments, and death itself, in his service; to those holy confessors, who have abandoned everything that the world holds dear for his love; is it possible, I ask, that he will refuse to these good and faithful servants, these dear children, whatever they ask, especially when they

\* Col. ii. 10.

† Heb. xii. 22.

plead for those who are his children too, and whom his Divine Son died to save? And most of all, what will he refuse to that Blessed Mother, who bore him in her womb, nursed him in her arms, fed him with her own milk, and during three and thirty years performed all the offices of the tenderest of mothers in his regard, until she received his last expiring sigh upon the cross? You see, then, how clearly it stands to reason that the prayers of the Saints, and especially of Mary, the Queen of Saints, have great, very great power with Almighty God.

When you grow older, you will sometimes hear Protestants say that Catholics dishonour our Blessed Lord by asking the prayers of the Saints, and that there is only one Mediator, Jesus Christ, between God and man, that is to say, only one who can plead for us at the throne of God. Now, those who say this forget that the Catholic Church teaches that the Passion and Death of our Blessed Lord are the source of all merit, and that whatever grace God gives, whether to man, or Saint, or Angel, he grants only for the sake of his Divine Son. How, then, can it dishonour Jesus Christ, if we ask others to offer for us to God the merits of our Blessed Lord, as well as offer them ourselves, especially when those we ask are the special friends of God? And this is simply what we do when we ask the Saints and Angels to pray for us, since we know that they are only heard, because their prayers are offered up in union with and through the merits of Jesus Christ. And again, if it is no dishonour to our Blessed Lord to ask the prayers of our brethren upon earth, who are sinners like ourselves, a thing which Protestants themselves do not scruple to do, how can it dishonour him to ask the prayers of those pure Spirits and Blessed Saints who have in them no spot or stain of sin, and are always pleasing in his sight?

**Q.** How do you prove that the Saints and Angels know what passes on earth?

**A.** By the words of Christ; "There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."—*Luke xv. 10.*

These words of our Lord prove clearly, my dear children, that the Blessed Spirits in heaven not only know, but take the liveliest interest in what passes upon earth. *There shall be joy before the Angels of God*, he says, *upon one sinner doing penance.* It is plain that they must know of the sinner's repentance to be able to rejoice at it. Hence, also, in many parts of the Holy Scriptures we find the Angels mentioned as pleading before the throne of God for the wants of man, which shows that they both know our wants and are anxious to relieve them. When Moses died, the Archangel, St. Michael, says St. Jude, "disputing with the devil, contended about his body."\* The Blessed St. Michael, to whom the care of the Jews seems to have been particularly entrusted by God, knowing of the death of Moses, feared, no doubt, lest the Jews, so prone to idolatry, might be tempted, after the manner of the surrounding nations, to render Divine worship to the body of one whom they had seen perform so many miracles. Again, the prophet Zachary says, that the Angel, who appeared to him, pleaded at the throne of God for mercy on the Jews, reminding the Lord that he had now been angry with them for seventy years.† And the Apostle St. John says, in the book of his Revelations, that he saw the Angels offering up the prayers of the faithful servants of God upon the golden altar.‡ From these and other passages of Holy Scripture it is clearly seen, that the Angels know our wants, offer up our prayers, and themselves plead for us before God. And if the Angels thus know

\* Jude i. 9.

† Zach. i. 12.

‡ Apoc. viii. 3, 4.

what passes on earth and interest themselves so lovingly in our behalf, why not the Saints too, those Blessed Spirits of the just made perfect, who, like the Angels, ever enjoy the sight of God, and are his special friends and favourites? If God could not hide, as he says, from that just man Abraham the vengeance which he was about to execute on the guilty city of Sodom,\* is it likely that he will hide from his beloved Saints in heaven—the wants of their parents, relations, and friends, whom they have left behind them upon earth, or of those who honour them devoutly and recommend themselves to their intercession. No, my dear children, in beholding the clear vision of God, the Saints in him likewise behold his creatures. The knowledge which they had when on earth of the wants of their fellow-men, and their tender charity and compassion for those wants, only become more perfect when they are removed from earth to heaven. There they no longer see, as before, “in part and in a dark manner,” as the Apostle says, but “face to face;” for “when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away;† and there the flames of charity with which they were consumed on earth shall burn more brightly, being lit up in the presence of God at the very furnace of love, for *God is Charity.*‡

Q. What is the prayer to our Blessed Lady which the Church teaches?

A. The Hail Mary.

If the Our Father is the best of all prayers, the second best is certainly *the Hail Mary*. For the Hail Mary is not a common prayer made by man, but a Divine prayer inspired by God himself, and uttered first by the lips of Angels and of Saints.

\* Gen. xviii. 17. † I. Cor. xiii. 10–12. ‡ I. John iv. 16.

Accordingly, there is no prayer, after the Our Father, which has at all times been more in use in the Catholic Church than the Hail Mary. The Church herself frequently repeats it in the sacred office recited by her clergy at the different hours of the day, and recommends it continually to her children, to be used by them in their daily morning and evening prayers, and also in the Rosary, Angelus, and other devotions. Since, therefore, we repeat the Hail Mary so often, we ought to understand it well, in order that we may say it with proper dispositions. But before I begin to explain it to you, repeat it for me slowly and devoutly.

**Q.** Say the Hail Mary.

**A.** Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

You see here, my dear children, that the Hail Mary is divided into two distinct parts, the first of which begins with the words "Hail Mary," and the second with the words "Holy Mary." The catechism now goes on to explain the first part. Tell me, then,

**Q.** Who made the first part of the Hail Mary?

**A.** The angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Yes, the first part was composed by the Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, the cousin of the Blessed Virgin, inspired by the Holy Ghost. You know already the history of these Divine words, for I have before told you how our Blessed Lady, when praying in her little cottage at Nazareth for the redemption of man, was visited by the great Archangel, St. Gabriel, who came to her on the part of God to announce to her, that she was chosen among all women to be the Mother of his Son made man.

"Hail Mary," he said to her, "full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." He then went on to announce that the Son of God should be born of her, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without prejudice to her virginity. And Mary having given her consent to the accomplishment of the mystery in those humble words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word," at the same moment the Redeemer of the world took flesh within her womb.

The other words of the first part of the Hail Mary were first spoken by St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Baptist and the cousin of the Blessed Virgin. It was on the occasion of the visit which Mary paid to St. Elizabeth soon after she had received the message of the Angel. No sooner did St. Elizabeth behold her and hear her voice, than the infant in her womb leaped for joy, and St. Elizabeth, being "filled," as the evangelist says, "with the Holy Ghost," exclaimed, as if taking up the very words of the Archangel, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.\** To these words the Church has added the Holy Name of Jesus, which the Angel on different occasions taught to Mary and to Joseph.

I have now related to you, my dear children, the *history* of the first part of the Hail Mary. Attend while I explain to you, in short, the *meaning* of the words it is composed of.

The word *Hail* is a form of greeting in use in the East, and means "I salute" or "I greet thee."

*Mary* is the name of the Blessed Mother of God, a name full of mysteries and dear to the hearts of her children. It means, in the Hebrew language, "Lady," and is also interpreted "Star of the Sea," as St. Bernard explains to us.

\* Luke i. 40, &c.

*Full of grace*, for Mary was always full of Divine Grace, even before she conceived in her womb the very Fountain and Author of Grace, our Blessed Lord. In her very conception, indeed, God had not only preserved her from sin, but had enriched her with every grace that could fit her for the most high dignity of Mother of God, and these graces she so well corresponded with, that she became, as the Church calls her in the Litany, a spiritual vessel, full of every virtue and excellence.

*The Lord is with thee.* For even before he took flesh in her womb he dwelt by grace spiritually in her heart.

*Blessed art thou amongst women.* Blessed, indeed, and happy above all other women in being chosen to be the Mother of her God.

*And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.* Yes, the fruit of her womb is no other than the ever Blessed Jesus, who is "worthy to be praised and glorified and exalted for ever." \* Thus, in the Hail Mary, we glorify the Son along with the Mother in the spirit of the Church of God, which, after the example of St. Elizabeth herself, never separates the Mother of the Redeemer from him whom she brought into the world.

The catechism now goes on to speak of the second or last part of the Hail Mary, which begins with these words, "Holy Mary, Mother of God."

Q. Who made the last part?

A. The Church of God, guided by the same Holy Spirit.

*The Church of God*, my dear children, *guided by the same Holy Spirit* who had inspired the Angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, made the second part of the Hail Mary. Listen and I will tell you how it was that it came to be composed and to be used by the faithful throughout the Church.

\* Dan. iii 52.

During the time of the Apostles and their immediate disciples, when the memory of Mary's holiness and greatness was fresh among mankind, no one ever thought of calling in question her high dignity and power with God. But about four hundred years after our Blessed Lord, there arose an impious man, named Nestorius, who dared to blame the Church for the honour paid to the Blessed Virgin, and to assert blasphemously that she was not the Mother of *God* but only of *man*, as if the human nature, which God the Son took of Mary, were a person of itself, separate and distinct from God the Son, who took it. Thus, you see, he made Jesus Christ *as man*, a different person from Jesus Christ *as God*, whereas you know that it was the same Person, the Son of God, who, being God from all eternity, took a human body of the Blessed Virgin, and was made man at the time of his Incarnation to redeem us. The Catholic Church teaches, therefore, that Mary, being the Mother of this Person, the Son of God made man, is justly called the "Mother of God," and honoured as such.

To confound the false teaching of Nestorius and prevent him from misleading the minds of the faithful, a great council of Bishops and Archbishops, headed by the legates or representatives of the Pope, met in the year 431 at Ephesus, a city of Asia Minor. It was in this city, as we learn from early tradition, that Mary had spent the last years of her life in company with the beloved disciple to whose care our Blessed Lord had entrusted her, and the memory of her holy life and sublime virtues was still cherished fondly in the hearts of the Ephesians. After hearing all that Nestorius had to plead in defence of his false doctrine, and all that St. Cyril of Alexandria, who accused him before the Council, had to say in defence of Catholic truth, the Council

unanimously declared that it had always been taught and believed in the Church that there was but one Person in Jesus Christ, the Person of God the Son; and that Mary, being the Mother of Jesus Christ, was, therefore, the Mother of God. The whole city of Ephesus, transported with joy at the decision of the Council, took up the cry with one voice, "Mary is the Mother of God;" and the people, forming themselves into procession, paraded the streets in the midst of general illuminations and rejoicing, singing everywhere canticles and hymns in honour of the ever Blessed Virgin.

The words of the second part of the Hail Mary are so simple and easy, and come so home to the heart of every child of Mary, that they scarcely, I think, require any explanation. *Holy Mary, Mother of God.* In these words we express our firm faith in the doctrine of the Catholic Church that she is truly the Mother of God, and we arouse our confidence by reminding her of that title, on which our hopes are so firmly grounded; for what can the Son of God refuse to his own Mother? *Pray for us sinners now.* These words contain a beautiful and humble prayer for her continual assistance in all our present wants. We acknowledge, indeed, that we are sinners, but that is only another motive to excite her compassion, for is she not the Refuge of sinners, and the Mother of Him who died to atone for our sins? *And at the hour of death.* Yes, in that hour of our last struggle, when all shall have abandoned us and when we most need her powerful help. May she be near us then to soothe and support us, to drive away the evil spirits, to receive our last sigh, and welcome us into the kingdom of her Divine Son. Oh, my dear children, how much courage will not the remembrance of so many Hail Marias that we have said during life give us at that last moment, if

we have only said them with fervour and devotion; for each of them is a prayer for a happy death, and for Mary's special help in the hour of our greatest need! Try, then, always, in reciting the Hail Mary, to say it not with your lips only, but with your heart, desiring to unite yourself, in saying the first part, with the Angel Gabriel and the Blessed Elizabeth, and to repeat the second with the same fervour with which it was first proclaimed in the churches of Ephesus.

We conclude, as in the Our Father, with the word *Amen*, by which we mean, "This is truly our prayer, O Blessed Mother; be thou pleased to receive and to grant it!"

Q. Why do we say the Hail Mary so often?

A. To put us in mind of the Incarnation of God the Son, and to honour His blessed Mother.

Q. Why does the Catholic Church show such devotion to the Blessed Virgin?

A. Because she is the Immaculate Mother of God.

These are questions, my dear children, which are often put to Catholics by those who differ from them in religion, and which every Catholic, therefore, should be well able to answer. The Catechism teaches you how to do so; and indeed, you will always find that the words of the Catechism contain the best and most exact answers that can be given to the objections, urged against the doctrines of the Church by those who do not belong to her. Hence, a Catholic child, who knows and *understands* his catechism well, is a match for the most learned divine who rejects the teaching of the Church.

Why is it, then, that we *say the Hail Mary so often*? The catechism says it is for two reasons: first, *to put us in mind of the Incarnation of God the Son*; and, secondly, *to honour his blessed Mother*.

In the first place, it is *to put us in mind of the Incarnation of God the Son*, that is to say, to remind us continually how the Son of God took a human body and soul, and became man to redeem us. Indeed, the Hail Mary is, as it were, a short history of our Blessed Lord's Incarnation. You have there the message of the Angel announcing the sublime mystery, the testimony of St. Elizabeth to the fact of its accomplishment, and the solemn declaration of the Church, that our Blessed Lord is truly God made man, and Mary his Mother. What can be more fitting for us, than continually to excite our love and gratitude to our Blessed Lord for becoming man, by repeating the history of this great event in words, not written merely by the pen of man, but by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth itself!

The second reason why we so often repeat the Hail Mary, is *to honour the Blessed Mother of God*. For, as I told you before, we cannot separate in our thoughts and affections the Son from the mother. When we think of that loving Saviour who became man to redeem us, we naturally think of her who brought him into the world, nursed and tended him in his infancy, was inseparably united with him in his youth and manhood, and stood by him in all his cruel sufferings, even to his last expiring sigh upon the cross. And when we think of her, we *love* her, we love her for her love and tender care of Him, and for that tender love of us which made her sacrifice for our salvation that Divine Son, who was the only joy of her life, nay, far more to her than life itself. But we do more than love her. We *reverence and honour* her for her high dignity and near relation to him who is worthy of all honour and adoration. We cannot forget that God himself has honoured her by choosing her as his Mother, by preserving her immaculate or unstained by sin, by endowing her with

every grace, and showing her in everything a filial reverence and ready obedience during the thirty years he lived with her on earth. Oh! my dear children, how can we go wrong in imitating our dear Lord himself in the love and reverence which he showed to his Blessed Mother? How beautifully do the words of your hymn answer every objection that can be brought against the devotion which is shown by every true Catholic to the Blessed Mother of God!

“ But scornful men have coldly said  
Thy love was leading me from God,  
And yet in this I did but tread  
The very path my Saviour trod.

“ They know but little of thy worth  
Who speak these heartless words to me,  
For what did Jesus love on earth  
One-half so tenderly as thee?

“ Jesus, when his three hours were done,  
Bequeathed thee from the cross to me.  
How can I rightly love thy Son,  
Sweet Mother, if I love not thee?”

Cherish, then, ever in your hearts a tender devotion to the Blessed Mother of God. Remember, as the hymn says, that she is your own mother, since our Blessed Lord has committed you to her care when dying on the cross; love her, therefore, and honour her as such. Place an unbounded confidence in her intercession, for what can our Blessed Lord refuse to her whom he himself so loves and honours? If the mother of an earthly king can hardly meet with a refusal when she asks a favour from her royal son, how much less the Mother of the King of Heaven, especially as what she asks, being for the salvation

of man, is always in accordance with the wishes of his Sacred Heart? In all your wants and necessities, therefore, recommend yourself to Mary, and especially ask her help in time of temptation by some little prayer, such as that which comes upon the miraculous medal: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!" Do not fail to recite the Angelus morning, noon, and night, in honour of Jesus and his Blessed Mother, and very often, too, the Rosary, that beautiful devotion, so dear to the faithful children of Mary. The remembrance of the devotion you have shown to Mary during life will be your sweetest consolation and support at the hour of death.

"And when my last expiring sigh  
My soul from earth shall free,  
Do thou, bright Queen of Saints, stand by  
And bear it up to God on high,  
Star of the boundless sea."

#### ST. MARY OF EGYPT.

St. Mary of Egypt, that great model of penitence, led in her youth an abandoned life in the city of Alexandria, in Egypt. Walking one day on the sea-shore, she perceived a vessel on the point of setting out to the Holy Land with a number of pilgrims who were going to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Mary embarked along with them, not for purposes of devotion, but to obtain a better opportunity of following her wicked life among so vast a concourse of pilgrims. Having arrived at Jerusalem, she repaired to the church along with the rest of the faithful who were eager to venerate the remains of the Sacred Cross; but on attempting to enter, she was held back by a mysterious and invisible power. This was repeated each time that she renewed the attempt. While others entered with ease, an irresistible force drove her back to the church porch. Filled with terror and amazement at this extraordinary occurrence, she began to consider within herself

whether it might not be a just punishment for her wicked life, which rendered her unworthy to approach within sight of the sacred relics. Then, bathed in tears, she beat her breast and bewailed her wretched condition, until at length, perceiving above her head the image of our Blessed Lady, she threw herself on the ground, and earnestly besought the Mother of God, the Refuge of Sinners, to intercede with her Divine Son that she might be permitted to venerate, with the rest of the faithful, the sacred wood on which he died for the sins of men. At the same time, she promised that if this favour were granted her, she would forthwith abandon her wicked life, and do penance, to the best of her power, for her past sins. Having finished her prayer, she again attempted to enter, and this time she experienced no hindrance. When she had performed her devotions, she returned to the image of Mary to thank her for her powerful protection and beg her direction for her future life. That same night, warned by a mysterious voice, she set out on foot to the river Jordan, and having received the Sacraments in a little church upon its banks, crossed the river and entered the savage deserts beyond it. For seven and forty years she continued here in the practice of the most severe penance, living on the roots of the earth, and suffering the greatest extremities of cold and heat. A year before her death she was discovered in this solitude by the holy priest Zosimus, a monk in a neighbouring monastery, whom God sent to administer to her the Holy Sacraments before her death, and to whom she related her wonderful and edifying history.—*Butler's Saints' Lives.*

#### ST. TERESA'S DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

The holy virgin St. Teresa was blessed with a good and virtuous mother, who taught her early to love the Blessed Virgin and practice little devotions in her honour. She was not quite twelve years old, however, when her mother died, and, as the little Teresa had loved her tenderly, she was almost inconsolable at her loss. In the midst of her affliction, she threw herself before an image of our Blessed Lady, and begged her, with many tears, now that her earthly mother was taken from her, to be a mother to her in her stead. This act of St. Teresa, performed in all the fervour and simplicity of childhood, drew upon her the special love and protection of Mary; and the saint assures us that she never recommended herself to her Heavenly Mother without experiencing her help.—*Life of St. Teresa.*

Let us imitate this holy virgin, and, having chosen Mary for our mother, let us pray to her with a lively confidence, love her with filial tenderness, and honour her by good and innocent lives.

ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA.

The young St. Stanislaus Kostka, who died at the early age of eighteen, was distinguished among his many virtues for his tender and child-like devotion to the Blessed Virgin. He was never so happy as when he was speaking of her, reciting her rosary, praying before her image, or depriving himself of some little indulgence in her honour.

Our Blessed Lady, on her part, rewarded his filial devotion with many special favours. On one occasion when he lay dangerously ill, she appeared to him carrying in her arms the Infant Jesus, and, placing the Divine Child on the bed beside him, permitted Stanislaus to admire, adore, and caress him. The heart of Stanislaus overflowed with a holy joy, and, like St. Peter on Mount Thabor, he wished always to enjoy the same happiness; but Mary, with a look of love, said to him, "Your time is not yet come, my child. You must first merit the possession of Jesus by an entire obedience to his will."

The holy youth was not long separated from the object of his desire. While performing the exercises of the novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Rome, he was seized with his last illness, which he himself had foretold a few days previously. The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin was drawing near, and he had earnestly prayed that he might be permitted to celebrate that great festival in heaven. On the eve of the Assumption, a slight illness from which he was suffering became at once so alarming, that it was thought advisable to administer to him the last Sacraments. He received them with extraordinary fervour, and remained afterwards conversing interiorly with his Saviour. From time to time he pressed to his lips an image of Our Lady, which he held in his hand, or cast his eye upon his rosary beads, which he had entwined about his arm. "Stanislaus," said one of the fathers, "what are you doing with your beads, now that you are no longer able to say them?" "It is true, I cannot say them," said the sick youth, smiling, "but still it is a consolation to look at them, for they remind me of my good Mother."

Shortly before his death, our Blessed Lady came herself to receive his soul, attended by a company of holy virgins, as Stanislaus himself related to the bystanders. A heavenly joy lit up the countenance of the dying youth, and a few moments after he breathed out his pure soul in the arms of his heavenly Mother, on the morning of the feast of her glorious Assumption.—*Life of St. Stanislaus Kostka.*

May you, my dear children, imitate this holy youth in his innocence, his purity, and his tender devotion to Mary, and may your last end be like to his !

LAUS DEO, HONOR MARLÆ.

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